

THE
MORTIFICATION OF SIN
IN
BELIEVERS:

CONTAINING

The NECESSITY, NATURE, and
MEANS of it.

With a Resolution of sundry CASES of CONSCIENCE
thereunto belonging.

By JOHN OWEN, D.D. *K*
A Servant of JESUS CHRIST in the Work of the GOSPEL.

A NEW EDITION.

L O N D O N:

PRINTED and Sold at N^o 62, *Dorset-street,*
Salisbury-square, Fleet-street; also by Mr.
BUCKLAND, *Paternoster-row;* and Mr.
MATTHEWS, *Strand.*

M,DCC,LXXXIII.

8

THE BRITISH MUSEUM

BRITISH MUSEUM



BRITISH MUSEUM

CHRISTIAN READER,

I SHALL in a few words acquaint thee with the reasons that obtained my consent to the publishing of the ensuing discourse. The consideration of the present state and condition of the generality of professors, the visible evidences of the frame of their hearts and spirits, manifesting a great disability of dealing with the temptations, wherewith from the peace they have in the world, and the divisions that they have among themselves, they are encompassed, holds the chief place amongst them. - This, I am assured, is of so great importance, that if hereby I only occasion others to press more effectually on the consciences of men, the work of considering their ways, and to give more clear direction for the compassing of the end proposed, I shall well esteem of my lot in this undertaking. This was seconded by an observation of some mens dangerous mistakes, who of late days have taken upon them to give directions for the mortification of sin, who being unacquainted with the mystery of the Gospel, and the efficacy of the death of Christ, have anew imposed the yoke of a self-wrought-out mortification on the necks of their disciples, which neither they nor

their forefathers were ever able to bear. A mortification they cry up and press, suitable to that of the Gospel neither in respect of nature, subject, causes, means, nor effects; which constantly produces the deplorable issues of superstition, self-righteousness and anxiety of conscience, in them who take up the burden which is so bound for them.

What is here proposed in weakness, I humbly hope will answer the spirit and letter of the Gospel, with the experiences of them who know what it is to walk with God according to the tenor of the covenant of grace. So that if not this, yet certainly something of this kind, is very necessary at this season, for the promotion and furtherance of this work of Gospel mortification in the hearts of Believers, and their direction in paths safe, and wherein they may find rest to their souls. Something I have to add, as to what in particular relates unto myself. Having preached on this subject, unto some comfortable success, through the grace of him that administered seed to the Sower, I was pressed by sundry persons, in whose hearts are the ways of God, thus to publish what I had delivered, with such additions and alterations as I should judge necessary. Under the inducement of their desires, I called to remembrance the debt wherein I have now for some years stood engaged unto
sundry

fundry noble and worthy christian friends, as to a treatise of *Communion with God*, some while since promised to them; and thereon apprehended, that if I could not hereby compound for the greater debt, yet I might possibly tender them this discourse of variance with themselves, as interest for their forbearance of that *peace and communion with God*. Besides, I considered that I had been providentially engaged in the public debate of sundry controversies in religion, which might seem to claim something in another kind of more general use, as a fruit of choice, not necessity: on these and the like accounts, is this short discourse brought forth to public view, and now presented unto thee. I hope I may own in sincerity, that my heart's desire unto God, and the chief design of my life in the station wherein the good providence of God hath placed me, are, that mortification and universal holiness may be promoted in my own and in the hearts and ways of others, to the glory of God, that so the Gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ may be adorned in all things; for the compassing of which end, if this little discourse (of the publishing whereof this is the sum of the account I shall give) may in any thing be useful to the least of the

Since the first Edition of this Treatise, that other also is published.

saints, it will be looked on as a return of the weak prayers wherewith it is attended by its unworthy author.

J. OWEN.

ADVERTISEMENT.

Books are to us, as we are to the books which we read. If a Reader be vain, or vicious, curious, or censorious, those books which gratify, or attempt to justify his predominant turn, will have the preference. This book will always have the honour to be condemned by such Readers. But, if the Reader of this small treatise be wounded with a deep sense of guilt, and wearied out with self-righteous attempts to pacify his conscience, and to purify his affections, this treatise of *Dr. John Owen* on the Mortification of Sin in Believers, may be to him a blessing.

Our affections cannot be purified, unless our consciences are pacified: the conscience of a sinner may be quieted by some Quack or other, for a season, but, it cannot be *purged from dead works to serve the living God*, but by the *blood of the Lamb*: nor is there any power, but the power of the *Holy Ghost* that can effectually apply this divine remedy.—Such are the grand outlines of this excellent treatise; which, though having passed through three editions, is now out of print; and it is believed, that this is sufficient to recommend the present edition to the pious Reader.

11 JY 63

DORSET STREET,

April 10, 1783.

THE
MORTIFICATION OF SIN
IN
BELIEVERS.

CHAP. I.

The foundation of the whole ensuing discourse laid in Rom. viii. 13. The words of the Apostle opened. The certain connexion between true mortification and salvation. Mortification, the work of Believers. The Spirit the principal efficient cause of it. What meant by the Body in the words of the Apostle. What by the Deeds of the body. Life in what sense promised to this duty.

THAT what I have of *direction* to contribute to the carrying on of the work of mortification in believers, may receive order and perspicuity, I shall lay the foundation of it in those words of the Apostle. Rom. viii. 13. *If ye by the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the flesh, ye shall live; and reduce the whole to an improvement of the great evangelical truth and mystery contained in them.*

The Apostle having made a recapitulation of his doctrine of justification by faith, and the blessed

The MORTIFICATION of

estate and condition of them who are made by *grace* partakers thereof, *verse* 1, 2, 3, of this *chapter*, proceeds to *improve* it, to the *holiness* and *consolation* of believers.

Among his arguments and motives unto *holiness*, the verse mentioned containeth *one*, from the contrary events and effects of *holiness* and *sin*. *If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die*. What it is to *live after the flesh*, and what it is to *die*, that being not my present aim and business, I shall no otherwise explain, than as they will fall in with the sense of the latter words of the verse, as before proposed.

In the words peculiarly designed for the foundation of the ensuing discourse, there is

1. A *duty* prescribed; *mortify the deeds of the body*.

2. The Persons are denoted to whom it is prescribed; *Ye, if ye mortify*.

3. There is in them a *promise* annexed to that duty, *ye shall live*.

4. The *cause* or means of the performance of this duty, the *Spirit*; *If ye through the Spirit*.

5. The *conditionality* of the whole *proposition*, wherein *duty*, *means*, and *promise*, are contained, *If ye, &c.*

The first thing occurring in the words, as they lie in the entire *proposition*, is the *conditional* note; *as if* but *if*. Conditionals in such propositions may denote two things.

1. The *uncertainty* of the *event*, or thing *promised* in respect of them to whom the *duty* is prescribed. And this takes place where the *condition* is absolutely *necessary* unto the issue, and depends not its self on any determinate cause, known to him to whom it is prescribed. So we say, *If we live we will do such a thing*. This cannot be the intentment of the *conditional* expression in this place. Of the *persons* to whom these words are spoken, it is said

said *verse 1.* of the same *chapter*, there is no *condemnation* to them.

2. The certainty of the *coherence* and *connection* that is between the things spoken of. As we say to a sick man, If you will take such a *portion*, or use such a remedy, you will be well. The thing we solely intend to express, is the *certainty* of the connection that is between the *portion* or remedy, and *health*. And this is the use of it here. The certain connection that is between the *mortifying of the deeds* of the body, and *living*, is intimated in this conditional particle.

Now the *connection* and *coherence* of things being manifold, as of *cause* and *effect*, of *way* and *means*, and the *end*; this between *mortification* and *life*, is not of cause and effect properly and strictly, for *eternal life is the gift of God through Jesus Christ*. Rom. vi. 23. But of *means* and *end*: God hath appointed this *means*, for the attaining that *end*, which he hath freely promised. *Means* though necessary have a fair subordination to an *end* of free promise. A *gift*, and a procuring *cause* in him to whom it is given, are inconsistent. The intendment then of this proposition as conditional, is, *That there is a certain infallible connexion and coherence between true mortification and eternal life*: if you use this *means*, you shall obtain that *end*: If you do *mortify*, you shall *live*. And herein lies the main *motive* unto, and *enforcement* of the duty prescribed.

2. The next thing we meet with in the words, is the *persons* to whom this duty is *prescribed*; and that is expressed in the word *ye*, in the original included in the verb *ἡγιασθε*. if *ye mortify*: that is, *ye believers*; ye to whom *there is no condemnation*, v. 1. ye that are not in the *flesh*, but in the *Spirit*; v. 5. who are *quickened by the Spirit of Christ*, v. 10, 11, to you is this duty *prescribed*.

The

The pressing of this duty *immediately* on any other, is a notable fruit of that superstition and self-righteousness that the world is so full of; the great work and design of *devout* men, ignorant of the Gospel, *Rom. x. 3, 4. John xv. 5.* Now this *description* of the *persons*, in conjunction with the *prescription* of the *duty*, is the main foundation of the ensuing discourse, as it lies in this *thesis* or proposition.

The choicest believers, who are assuredly freed from the condemning power of sin, ought yet to make it their business all their days, to mortify the indwelling power of sin.

3. The principal *efficient cause* of the performance of this duty, is the *Spirit*: *εἰ δὲ πνεύματι, ἢ ὑπὸ τοῦ πνεύματος*, *if by the Spirit.* The *Spirit* here, is the *Spirit* mentioned *v. 11.* the *Spirit of Christ*, the *Spirit of God*, that *dwells* in us, *v. 9,* that *quickens* us, *v. 11.* the *Holy Ghost*, *v. 14,* the *Spirit of Adoption*, *v. 15,* the *Spirit* that *maketh intercession* for us, *v. 26.* All other ways of mortification are vain, all *helps* leave us *helpless*, it must be done by the *Spirit.* Men, as the Apostle intimates, *Rom. ix. 30, 31, 32,* may attempt this work on other principles, by means and advantages administered on other accounts, as they always have done, and do; but (saith he) this is the *work* of the *Spirit*, by him alone is it to be *wrought*, and by no other power is it to be *brought* about. Mortification from a self-strength, carried on by ways of self-invention, unto the end of a self-righteousness, is the soul and substance of all false religion in the world: And this is a second principle of my ensuing discourse.

4. The *duty* itself, *mortify the deeds of the body*, is next to be remarked.

Three things are here to be enquired into,

1. What is meant by the *body*.

2. What by the *deeds of the body*.

3. What

3. What by *mortifying* of them.

1. The *body* in the close of the verse, is the same with the *flesh* in the beginning. *If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die*, but if ye *mortify the deeds of the body*; that is, of the *flesh*. It is that which the Apostle hath all along discoursed of, under the name of the *flesh*, which is evident from the prosecution of the antithesis between the *spirit* and the *flesh*, before and after. The *body* then here is taken for that corruption and pravity of our natures, whereof the body in a great part is the seat and instrument: The very members of the body, being made servants unto unrighteousness thereby, Rom. vi. 19. It is *indwelling sin*, the *corrupted flesh*, or lust that is intended. Many reasons might be given of this metonymical expression, that I shall not now insist on. The *body* here is the same with *παλαιὸς ἀνθρώπος*, and *σῶμα τῆς ἀμαρτίας*, the *old man*, and the *body of sin*. Rom. vi. 6; or, it may *synecdochically* express the whole person considered as corrupted, and the seat of *lusts*, and distempered affections.

2. The *deeds* of the body, the word is *πράξεις*, which indeed denoteth the outward *actions* chiefly. The works of the *flesh*, as they are called; *τὰ ἔργα τῆς σαρκὸς*, Gal. v. 19, which are there said to be manifest: and are enumerated. Now, though the outward *deeds* are here only expressed, yet the inward and next causes are chiefly intended, the axe is to be laid to the root of the tree: The deeds of the flesh are to be mortified in their causes, from whence they spring: the Apostle calls them *deeds*, as that which every lust tends unto: Though it do but conceive, and prove abortive, it aims to bring forth a perfect sin.

Having both in the seventh and the beginning of this chapter treated of *indwelling* lust and sin, as the fountain and principle of all sinful actions,

he

12 The MORTIFICATION of

he here mentions its destruction under the name of the effects which it doth produce. *περὶ τὰ σωματῶματα*, are as much as *φρόνημα τῆς σαρκὸς*, Rom. viii. 6. the *wisdom of the flesh*, by a metonymy of the same nature with the former; or as the *παθήματα* and *ἐπιθυμίας*, the *passions and lusts of the flesh*, Gal. v. 24. whence the *deeds and fruits* of it do arise: and in this sense is the *body* used, v. 10. *The body is dead because of sin.*

3. To mortify; *ἐι θανάτῳ* if ye put to death: a metaphorical expression, taken from the putting of any living thing to death. To kill a man or any other living thing, is to take away the principle of all his strength, vigour, and power, so that he cannot act, or exert, or put forth any proper actings of his own; so it is in this case. *Inarwelling sin* is compared to a person, a living person; called the *old man*, with his *faculties*, and *properties*, his *wisdom*, *craft*, *subtily*, *strength*; this (says the Apostle) must be killed, put to death, mortified: That is, have its power, life, vigour and strength to produce its effects taken away by the Spirit. It is indeed *meritoriously* and by way of example utterly mortified and slain by the cross of Christ: and the old man is thence said to be crucified with Christ, Rom. vi. 6; and our selves to be dead with him, v. 8. and really, initially in regeneration, Rom. vi. 3, 4, 5. when a principle contrary to it, and destructive of it, Gal. v. 17, is planted in our hearts: but the whole work is by degrees to be carried on towards perfection all our days. Of this more in the process of our discourse.

The intendment of the Apostle in this prescription of the duty mentioned, is, that *The mortification of indwelling sin, remaining in our mortal bodies, that it may not have life and power to bring forth the works or deeds of the flesh, is the constant duty of believers.*

5. The

5. The promises unto this duty is life: ye shall live. The life promised, is opposed to the death threatened in the clause foregoing: *If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die*; which the same Apostle elsewhere expresseth; *ye shall of the flesh reap corruption*: Gal. vi. 8. or destruction from God. Now, perhaps, the word may not only intend eternal life, but also the spiritual life in Christ which here we have; not as to the essence and being of it, which is already enjoyed by believers, but as to the joy, comfort, and vigour of it: as the Apostle says in another case, *Now I live if ye stand fast*, 1 Thess. iii. 8. Now my life will do me good; I shall have joy and comfort with my life: ye shall live, lead a good, vigorous, comfortable, spiritual life whilst you are here, and obtain eternal life hereafter.

Supposing what was said before of the connection between mortification and eternal life, as of means and end, I shall add only as a second motive to the duty prescribed, that

The vigour and power and comfort of our spiritual life, depends on the mortification of the deeds of the flesh.

C H A P. II.

The principal assertion concerning the necessity of mortification proposed to confirmation. Mortification the duty of the best Believers, Col. iii. 5. 1 Cor. ix. 27. Indwelling sin always abides: No per-

section in this life. Phil. iii. 12. 1 Cor. xiii. 12. 2 Pet. iii. 18. Gal. v. xvii, &c. *The activity of abiding sin in Believers:* Rom. vii. 23. Jam. iv. 5. Heb. xii. 1. *Its fruitfulness and tendency.* Every lust aims at the height in its kind. *The Spirit and new nature given to contend against indwelling sin.* Gal. v. 17. 2 Pet. i. 4, 5. Rom. vii. 23. *The fearful issue of the neglect of mortification.* Rev. iii. 2. Heb. iii. 13. *The first general principle of the whole discourse hence confirmed.* Want of this duty lamented.

HAVING laid this foundation, a brief confirmation of the forementioned principal deductions will lead me to what I chiefly intend. The first is,

That *The choicest believers, who are assuredly freed from the condemning power of sin, ought yet to make it their business all their days to mortify the indwelling power of sin.*

So the Apostle, Col. iii. 5. *Mortify therefore your members, which are upon the earth.* Whom speaks he to? Such as were risen with Christ, v. 1. such as were dead with him, v. 3. such as whose life Christ was, and who should appear with him in glory, v. 4. *Do you mortify; do you make it your daily work, be always at it whilst you live, cease not a day from this work; be killing sin, or it will be killing you; your being dead with Christ virtually, your being quickened with him, will not excuse you from this work.* And our Saviour tells us, how his Father deals with every branch in him that beareth fruit, every true and living branch; he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit, John, xv. 2. He prunes it, and that not for a day or two, but whilst it is a branch in this world. And the Apostle tells you what was his practice, 1 Cor. ix. 27. *I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection.*

jection. I do it (saith he) daily, it is the work of my life, I omit it not; this is my business. And if this were the work and business of *Paul*, who was so incomparably exalted in grace, light, revelations, enjoyments, privileges, consolations, above the ordinary measure of believers; where may we possibly bottom an exemption from this work and duty whilst we are in this world? Some brief account of the reasons hereof may be given.

1. *Indwelling sin* always *abides*, whilst we are in this world, therefore it is always to be *mortified*. The *vain*, foolish, and ignorant disputes of men, about *perfect* keeping of the *commands* of God, of *perfection* in this life, of being *wholly and perfectly* dead to sin, I meddle not now with. It is more than *probable*, that the men of those abominations, never knew what belonged to the *keeping* of any one of God's commands; and are so much below *perfection* of degrees, that they never attained to a *perfection* of parts in obedience, or *universal* obedience in sincerity. And therefore many in our days who have talked of *perfection*, have been wiser, and have affirmed it to consist in knowing no difference between *good* and *evil*. Not that they are perfect in the things we call *good*, but that all is alike to them; and the height of wickedness is their perfection. Others who have found out a new way to it, by denying *original* indwelling sin, and a tempering the *spirituality* of the law of God, unto men's carnal hearts; as they have sufficiently discovered themselves to be ignorant of the life of Christ, and the power of it in believers, so they have invented a new righteousness, that the Gospel knows not of, being vainly puffed up by their fleshly minds. For us, who dare *not be wise above what is written*, nor *boast* by other mens lives of what God hath not done for us, we say, that *indwelling sin* lives in us in some measure and degree

whilst we are in this world. We dare not speak as *though we had already attained, or were already perfect*, Phil. iii. 12. *our inward man is to be renewed day by day*, whilst here we live, 2 Cor. iv. 16. and according to the *renovations of the new*, are the breaches and decays of the *old*. While we are here, we *know but in part*, 1 Cor. xiii. 12. having a remaining darkness to be gradually removed, by our *growth in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ*. 2 Pet. iii. 18. And the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, so that we cannot do the things that we would, Gal. v. 17. and are therefore defective in our obedience as well as in our light, 1 John, i. 8. We have a *body of death*, Rom. vii. 24. from whence we are not delivered, but by the *death of our bodies*, Phil. iii. 21. now it being our duty to mortify, to be killing of sin; whilst it is in us, we must be at work. He that is appointed to kill an enemy, if he leave striking, before the other ceases living, doth but half his work. Gal. vi. 9. Heb. xii. 1. 2 Cor. vii. 1.

2. Sin doth not only still *abide* in us, but is still acting, still labouring to bring forth the deeds of the flesh; When sin lets us alone, we may let sin alone: But as sin is never less quiet, than when it seems to be most quiet; and its waters are for the most part deep, when they are still; so ought our contrivances against it to be; vigorous at all times, in all conditions, even where there is least suspicion. Sin doth not only abide in us, but the law of the *members is still rebelling against the law of the mind*, Rom. vii. 23. and the Spirit that dwells in us lusteth to envy, Jam. iv. 5. It is always in continual work, the *flesh lusteth against the Spirit*, Gal. v. 17. Lust is still *tempting and conceiving sin*, Jam. i. 14. In every moral action, it is always either inclining to evil, or hindering from that which is good, or disframing the Spirit from communion with God.

It

It inclines to evil; *the evil that I would not, that I do*, saith the Apostle, Rom. vii. 19. whence is that? Why, because in me, *that is, in my flesh dwelleth no good thing*: and it hinders from good; *the good that I would do, that I do not*, v. 19. upon the same account, either I do it not; or not as I should; all my holy things being defiled by this sin. *The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, that ye cannot do the things that ye would*, Gal. v. 17. and it unframes our Spirit; and thence is called the sin that so easily be-sets us, Heb. xii. 1. on which account are those grievous complaints that the Apostle makes of it. Rom. vii. So that sin is always acting, always conceiving, always seducing and tempting. Who can say that he had ever any thing to do with God, or for God, that *indwelling* sin had not an hand in the corrupting of what he did? And this trade will it drive more or less all our days; if then sin will be always acting, if we be not always mortifying, we are lost creatures. He that stands still, and suffers his enemies to double blows upon him without resistance, will undoubtedly be conquered in the issue: If sin be subtil, watchful, strong, and always at work in the business of killing our souls; and we be slothful, negligent, foolish, in proceeding to the ruin thereof, can we expect a comfortable event? There is not a day but sin foils, or is foiled; prevails, or is prevailed on; and it will be so whilst we live in this world. I shall discharge him from this duty, who can bring sin to a composition, to a *cessation* of arms in this warfare; if it will spare him any one day, in any one duty, (provided he be a person that is acquainted with the *spirituality* of obedience, and the subtilty of sin) let him say to his soul, as to this duty, soul take thy rest. The saints whose souls breath after deliverance from its perplexing rebellion, know

there is no safety against it, but in a constant warfare.

3. Sin will not only be *striving, acting, rebelling, troubling, disquieting*, but if let alone, if not continually *mortified*, it will bring forth *great, cursed, scandalous, soul-destroying sins*. The Apostle tells us what the works and fruits of it are, *Gal. v. 19, 20, 21. The works of the flesh are manifest; which are, Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like*. You know what it did in *David*, and sundry others. Sin aims always at the utmost: every time it rises up to tempt or entice, might it have its own course, it would go out to the utmost sin in that kind. Every unclean thought or glance would be adultery, if it could; every covetous desire would be oppression; every thought of unbelief would be atheism, might it grow to its head. Men may come to that, that sin may not be heard speaking a scandalous word in their hearts; that is, *provoking* to any great sin with scandal in its mouth; but every rise of lust, might it have its course, would come to the height of villainy. It is like the grave, that is never satisfied. And herein lies no small share of the *deceitfulness* of sin, by which it prevails to the hardening of men, and so to their ruin: *Heb. iii. 13.* It is modest as it were in its first *motions* and proposals; but having once got footing in the heart by them, it constantly makes good its ground, and presseth on to some farther degrees in the same kind; this new acting and *pressing* forward, makes the soul take little notice of what an entrance to a *falling* off from God is already made; it thinks all is indifferent well, if there be no farther *progress*; and so far as the soul is made insensible of any sin, that is, as to such a sense

sense as the Gospel requireth, so far it is hardened: but sin is still pressing forward; and that because it hath *no bounds* but utter relinquishment of God, and opposition to him; that it proceeds towards its *height* by degrees, making good the ground it hath got by hardness, is not from its *nature*, but its *deceitfulness*. Now nothing can prevent this, but *mortification*, That withers the root and strikes at the head of sin every hour, that whatever it aims at, it is crossed in. There is not the best saint in the *world*, but if he should give over this *duty* would fall into as many cursed sins as ever any did of his kind.

4. This is one main reason why the Spirit and the new nature is given unto us, that we may have a principle within, whereby to oppose sin and lust: *The flesh lusteth against the Spirit*: well, and what then? *Why the Spirit also lusteth against the flesh*, Gal. v. 17. There is a propensity in the Spirit, or spiritual new Nature, to be acting against the flesh, as well as in the flesh to be acting against the Spirit: So 2 Pet. i. 4, 5. It is our *participation of the Divine Nature*, that gives us an *escape from the pollutions that are in the world through lust*: And Rom. vii. 23. there is a *law of the mind*, as well as a *law of the members*. Now this is, (1) The most unjust and unreasonable thing in the world; when two combatants are engaged, to bind one, and keep him up from doing his utmost, and to leave the other at liberty to wound him at his pleasure. And (2) the foolishhest thing in the world, to bind him who fights for our eternal condition, and to let him alone who seeks and violently attempts our everlasting ruin. The contest is for our *lives and souls*. Not to be daily employing the Spirit and new nature, for the *mortifying* of sin, is to neglect that *excellent succour*, which God hath given us against our greatest enemy.

enemy. If we neglect to make use of what we have received, God may justly hold his hand from giving us more. His *graces* as well as his *gifts* are bestowed on us to use, exercise, and trade with. Not to be daily *mortifying* sin, is to sin against the *goodness, kindness, wisdom, grace, and love* of God, who hath furnished us with a principle of doing it.

5. Negligence in this duty casts the soul into a perfect contrary condition to that, which the Apostle affirms was his, 2 Cor. iv. 16. *Though our outward man perish, our inward man is renewed day by day.* In these the inward man perisheth, and the outward man is renewed day by day. Sin is as the *house of David*, and grace as the *house of Saul*. Exercise and success are the two main *cherishers* of grace in the heart; when it is suffered to lie still, it withers and decays; the things of it are ready to die, Rev. iii. 2. and sin gets ground towards the *hardening of the heart*; Heb. iii. 13. This is that which I intend; by the omission of this duty, grace withers, lust flourisheth, and the frame of the heart grows worse and worse: and the Lord knows what desperate and fearful issues it hath had with many. Where sin through the neglect of mortification gets a considerable victory, it breaks the bones of the soul, Psal. xxxi. 10. Psal. li. 8. and makes a man weak, sick, and ready to die, Psal. xxxviii. 3, 4, 5. that he cannot look up, Psal. xl. 12. Isa. xxxiii. 24. and when poor creatures will take blow after blow, wound after wound, foil after foil, and never rouse up themselves to a vigorous opposition, can they expect any thing but to be hardened through the *deceitfulness of sin*; and that their souls should bleed to death? 2 Job. viii. Indeed it is a sad thing to consider the fearful *issues* of this neglect, which lie under our eyes every day.

day. See we not those whom we knew *bumble*, melting, broken-hearted Christians, tender and fearful to offend, zealous for God, and all his ways, his sabbaths, and ordinances, grown, through a neglect of watching unto this duty, *earthly*, carnal, cold, wrathful, complying with the men of the world, and things of the world, to the scandal of religion, and the fearful temptation of them that know them? The truth is, what between placing *mortification* in a rigid stubborn frame of Spirit which is for the most part earthly, legal, censorious, partial, consistent with wrath, envy, malice, pride, on the one hand, and pretences of liberty, grace, and I know not what on the other, true *evangelical* mortification is almost lost amongst us; of which afterwards.

6. It is our duty to be perfecting holiness in the *fear of the Lord*, 2 Cor. vii. 1. To be growing in grace every day, 1 Pet. ii. 2. 2 Pet. iii. 18. To be renewing our inward man day by day, 2 Cor. iv. 16. Now this cannot be done without the daily *mortifying* of sin: Sin sets its strength against every act of holiness, and against every degree we grow to. Let not that man think he makes any progress in holiness, who walks not over the bellies of his lusts; he, who doth not kill sin in his way, takes no steps towards his journey's end. He who finds not *opposition* from it, and who sets not himself in every particular to its *mortification*, is at *peace* with it, not *dying* to it.

This then is the first *general* principle of our ensuing discourse: Notwithstanding the *meritorious mortification* (if I may so speak) of all and every sin in the cross of Christ; notwithstanding the real foundation of universal mortification laid in our first conversion, by conviction of sin, *humiliation* for sin, and the implantation of a new principle, opposite to it, and *destructive* of it; yet
sin

fin doth so remain, so a&, and work, in the best of believers, whilst they live in this world, that the *constant daily mortification* of it is all their days *incumbent* on them. Before I proceed to the consideration of the next principle, I cannot but by the way *complain* of many *professors* of these days; who, instead of bringing forth such great and evident fruits of *mortification*, as are expected, scarce bear any leaves of it. There is indeed a broad light fallen upon the men of this generation; and together therewith many *spiritual gifts communicated*; which with some other considerations have wonderfully enlarged the bounds of professors and profession; both they and it are exceedingly multiplied and increased. Hence there is a noise of religion and religious duties in every corner; preaching in abundance; and that not in an empty, light, trivial and vain manner, as formerly, but to a good proportion of a spiritual gift; so that if you will measure the number of *believers* by light, gifts and profession, the Church may have cause to say, *Who hath born me all these?* But now if you will take the measure of them by this great discriminating grace of Christians, perhaps you will find their number not so multiplied. Where almost is that professor, who owes his *conversion* to these days of light, and so talks and professes at such a rate of spirituality, as few in former days were in any measure acquainted with, (I will not judge them, but perhaps *boasting* what the Lord hath done in them) that doth not give evidence of a miserably unmortified heart? if vain *spending of time*, *idleness*, *unprofitableness* in mens places, *envy*, *strife*, *variance*, *emulations*, *wrath*, *pride*, *worldliness*, *selfishness*, (1 Cor. i.) be badges of Christians, we have them on us, and amongst us in abundance. And if it be so with them who have so much *light*,
and

and which we hope is *saving*; what shall we say of some who would be accounted *religious*, and yet despise gospel light, and for the duty we have in hand, know no more of it, but what consists in mens denying themselves sometimes in outward enjoyments, which is one of the outmost branches of it, which yet they will seldom practise! The good Lord send out a spirit of *mortification* to cure our distempers, or we are in a sad condition.

There are two evils which certainly attend every *unmortified* professor. The first in himself, and the other in respect of others.

1. In *himself*, let him pretend what he will, he hath *slight thoughts of sin*; at least of sins of daily infirmity. The root of an unmortified course, is the *digestion* of sin, without bitterness in the heart; when a man hath confirmed his imagination to such an apprehension of *grace* and *mercy*, as to be able without bitterness to swallow and digest daily sins, that man is at the very brink of *turning the grace of God into lasciviousness*, and being *hardened by the deceitfulness of sin*. Neither is there a greater evidence of a *false* and rotten heart in the world, than to drive such a trade. To use the *blood of Christ*, which is *given to cleanse us*, 1 Joh. i. vii. Tit. ii. xiv. The *exaltation* of Christ, which is to give us *repentance*, Acts v. xxxi. the *doctrine of grace*, which teaches us to *deny all ungodliness*, Tit. ii. 11, 12. to countenance sin, is a rebellion, that in the issue will break the *bones*. At this door have gone out from us, most of the professors that have *apostatized* in the days wherein we live, for a while they were most of them under convictions; these kept them unto duties, and brought them to profession. So they *escaped the pollutions that are in the world*, through the *knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ*, 2 Pet. ii. 20. But having got an acquaintance with the doctrine of
the

24. *The* MORTIFICATION *of*

the gospel, and being weary of duty, for which they had no principle, they began to countenance themselves in manifold neglects, from the doctrine of grace. Now when once this evil had laid hold of them, they speedily tumbled into perdition.

2. To *others*, it hath an evil influence on them, on a twofold account.

1. It *hardens* them, by begetting in them a persuasion that they are in as good condition as the *best* professors. Whatever they see in them, is so stained for want of this mortification, that it is of no value with them: they have zeal for religion, but it is *accompanied* with *want* of *forbearance*, and *universal righteousness*. They deny prodigality, but with worldliness: they separate from the world, but live wholly to themselves, taking no care to exercise *loving kindness* in the earth: or they talk spiritually, and live vainly: mention communion with God, and are every way *conformed* to the world; boasting of forgiveness of sin, and never forgiving others: and with such considerations do poor creatures harden their hearts in their *unregeneracy*.

2. They deceive them in making them believe, that if they can come up to their condition, it shall be well with them; and so it grows an easy thing, to have the great temptation of repute in religion to wrestle with: when they may go far *beyond* them, as to what appears in them, and yet come short of eternal life; but of these things, and all the evils of unmortified walking, afterwards.

C H A P. III.

The second general principle of the means of mortification proposed to confirmation. The Spirit the only author of this work. Vanity of Popish mortification discovered. Many means of it used by them not appointed of God. Those appointed by him abused. The mistakes of others in this business. The Spirit is promised Believers for this work. Ezek. xi. 19. Chap. xxxvi. 26. All that we receive from Christ is by the Spirit. How the Spirit mortifies sin, Gal. v. 19, 20, 21, 22, 23. The several ways of his operations to this end proposed. How his work, and our duty.

THE next principle relates to the great sovereign cause of the *mortification* treated of, which, in the words laid for the foundation of this discourse, is said to be the *Spirit*, that is, the Holy Ghost, as was evinced.

He only is sufficient for this work. All ways and means without him are as a thing of nought; and he is the great efficient of it, he *works in me, as he pleases*.

1. In vain do men seek other remedies, they shall not be healed by them. What several ways have been prescribed for this, to have sin *mortified*, is known. The greatest part of *Popish religion*, of that which looks most like religion in their profession, consists in mistaken ways and means of mortification. This is the pretence of their *rough garments*, whereby they deceive. Their *vows, orders, fastings, penances*, are all built on this ground, they are all for the mortifying of sin. Their *preachings, sermons, and books of devotion*, they look all this way. Hence those who interpret the *locusts* that came out of the *bottomless pit*, Rev. ix. 2.

C

To

To be the *friars* of the *Romish church*, who are said to torment men, so that they should seek death and not find it, v. 6. think, that they did it by their stinging *sermons*, whereby they convinced them of sin, but being not able to discover the remedy for the healing and mortifying of it, they kept them in perpetual anguish and terror, and such trouble in their consciences, that they *desired to die*. This I say is the substance and glory of their religion: but what with their labouring to *mortify* dead creatures, ignorant of the nature and end of the work, what with the poison they mixt with it, in their persuasion of its merit, yea supererogation, (as they stile their *unnecessary merit*, with a proud barbarous title) their glory is their shame; but of them and their *mortification*, more afterwards: *chap. viii.*

That the *ways* and *means* to be used for the mortification of sin, *invented* by them, are still *insisted on* and *prescribed* for the same end by some, who should have more *light* and knowledge of the Gospel, is known. Such directions to this purpose have of late been given by some, and are greedily *caught at* by *others* professing themselves *Protestants*, as might have become *Popish devotionists* three or four hundred years ago. Such outside endeavours, such bodily exercises, such self-performances, such merely *legal duties*, without the least mention of *Christ*, or his Spirit, are *varnished* over with swelling words of vanity, for the only means and *expedients* for the mortification of sin, as discover a deep-rooted unacquaintedness with the power of God, and mystery of the Gospel. The consideration hereof, was one motive to the publishing of this plain discourse.

Now the reasons why the *Papists* can never with all their endeavours truly mortify any one sin, amongst others, are,

1. Because

1. Because many of the ways and means they use and insist upon for this end, were never appointed of God for that purpose. Now there is nothing in religion that hath any efficacy for compassing an end, but it hath it from God's appointment of it to that purpose. Such as these are, their *rough garments*, their *vows*, penances, disciplines, their course of *monastical* life, and the like, concerning all which God will say, *Who hath required these things at your hands? and in vain do you worship me, teaching for doctrines the traditions of men.* Of the same nature are sundry *self-exaltations*, insisted on by others.

2. Because those things that are appointed of God as *means*, are not used by them in their due place and order; such as are *praying*, *fasting*, *watching*, *meditation*, and the like; these have their use in the business in hand. But whereas they are all to be looked on as *streams*, they look on them as the *fountain*. Whereas they *effect* and accomplish the end as means only subordinate to the *Spirit* and faith, they look on them to do it by virtue of the work wrought. If they *fast* so much, and *pray* so much, and keep their *hours* and times, the work is done: as the Apostle says of some in another case, they are always *learning*, never coming to the *knowledge of the truth*; so they are always *mortifying*, but never come to any sound *mortification*. In a word, they have sundry means to *mortify the natural man*, as to the *natural life* here we lead, none to mortify *lust* or *corruption*.

This is the general mistake of men ignorant of the Gospel, about this thing; and it lies at the bottom of very much of that superstition and will-worship that hath been brought into the world; what horrible self-macerations were practised by some of the ancient authors of *monastical devotion*? what violence did they offer to nature? what ex-

tremity of sufferings did they put themselves upon? search their ways and principles to the bottom, and you will find, that it had no other root but this mistake, namely, that attempting *rigid* mortification, they fell upon the *natural man*, instead of the corrupt old man; upon the body wherein we live, instead of the body of death.

Neither will the *natural Popery* that is in others do it. Men are *galled* with the guilt of a sin, that hath prevailed over them: they instantly promise to themselves and God, that they will do so no more; they watch over themselves, and pray, for a *season*, until this *heat* waxes cold, and the sense of sin is *worn* off, and so *mortification* goes also, and sin returns to its former *dominion*: *duties* are excellent *food* for an healthy soul; they are no *physic* for a *sick* soul. He that turns his *meat* into his *medicine*, must expect no great *operation*. Spiritually *sick* men cannot *sweat* out their *distemper* with *working*. But this is the way of men who deceive their own souls; as we shall see afterwards.

That none of these ways are sufficient, is evident from the nature of the work itself that is to be done; it is a work that requires so many concurrent actings in it, as no self-*endeavour* can reach unto; and is of that kind, that an almighty *energy* is necessary for its *accomplishment*, as shall be afterwards manifested.

It is then the work of the Spirit. For,

1. He is *promised* of God to be given unto us, to do this work; the taking away of the *stony* heart, that is, the *stubborn*, *proud*, *rebellious*, *unbelieving* heart, is in general the work of mortification that we treat of. Now this is still promised to be done by the Spirit: Ezek. xi. 19. chap. xxxvi. 26. *I will give my Spirit, and take away the stony heart*: and by the Spirit of God is this work

work wrought, when all means fail. *Isa.* lvii. 17, 18.

2. We have all our *mortification* from the gift of Christ, and all the gifts of Christ are *communicated* to us, and given us by the *Spirit* of Christ. *Without Christ we can do nothing*, *Job.* xv. 5. All *communications* of supplies and relief in the *beginnings*, *increasings*, *actings* of any grace whatever from him, are by the Spirit, by whom he alone *works* in and upon believers. From him we have our *mortification*: *He is exalted and made a prince and a Saviour, to give repentance unto us*: *Acts* v. 31. and of our repentance our *mortification* is no small portion. How doth he do it? having received the promise of the Holy Ghost, he sends him abroad for that end: *Act.* ii. 33. You know the manifold promises he made of sending the Spirit, as *Tertullian* speaks, *vicariam navare operam*, to do the *works* that he had to accomplish in us.

The resolution of one or two *questions* will now lead me nearer to what I principally intend.

The first is,

Q. *How doth the Spirit mortify sin?*

I answer, in general, three ways.

A. 1. By causing our hearts to abound in *grace*, and the *fruits* that are contrary to the flesh, and the fruits thereof, and principles of them. So the apostle opposes the fruits of the flesh, and of the Spirit: the fruits of the flesh (says he) are so and so, *Gal.* v. 19, 20. but, says he, the fruits of the Spirit are quite contrary, quite of another sort, *v.* 22, 23. Yea, but what if these are in us, and do abound, may not the other abound also? No, says he, *v.* 24. *They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts*: but how? Why, *v.* 25. by *living in the Spirit, and walking after the Spirit*: that is, by the abounding of these graces of the Spirit in us, and walking according

to them. For, saith the apostle, these are *contrary one to another*, v. 17. so that they cannot both be in the same subject, in any intense or high degree. This renewing of us by the Holy Ghost, as it is called, *Tit. iii. 5.* is one great way of *mortification*: he causes us to *grow, thrive, flourish*, and abound in those graces which are *contrary, opposite*, and destructive to all the *fruits* of the flesh, and to the quiet, or *thriving* of indwelling *sin* itself.

2. By a *real, physical* efficiency on the root and habit of sin, for the weakening, destroying and taking it away. Hence he is called a *Spirit of judgment and burning*, Isa. 4. 4. really consuming and destroying our lusts. He takes away the *stony heart* by an *almighty* efficiency; for as he *begins* the work as to its *kind*, so he *carries* it on as to its *degrees*. He is the fire which *burns* up the very *root* of lust.

3. He brings the *cross* of Christ into the heart of a sinner by faith, and gives us communion with Christ in his *death*, and *fellowship* in his sufferings; of the *manner* whereof more afterwards.

Q. If this be the *work of the Spirit alone*, how is it, that we are exhorted to it? Seeing the spirit of God only can do it, let the work be left wholly to him.

A. 1. It is no otherwise the work of the Spirit, but as all graces and good *works* which are in us, are his: He works in us *to will and to do of his own good pleasure*, Phil. ii. 13. He works all our *works in us*, Isa. xxvi. 12. *the work of faith with power*; 2 Thess. i. 11. Col. ii. 12. He causes us to *pray*, and is a *Spirit of supplication*, Rom. viii. 26. Zach. xii. 10. and yet we are *exhorted*, and are to be exhorted to all these.

2. He doth not so work our *mortification* in us, as not to keep it still an act of our *obedience*. The Holy Ghost works *in* us, and *upon* us, as we are
fit

fit to be wrought *in*, and *upon*, that is, so as to preserve our own *liberty*, and free obedience. He works upon our *understandings*, *wills*, *consciences*, and *affections*, agreeably to their own natures; He works *in us*, and *with us*, not *against us*, or *without us*; so that his assistance is an encouragement, as to the *facilitating* of the work, and no occasion of *neglect* as to the work itself. And indeed I might here bewail the endless *foolish* labour of poor souls, who being convinced of sin, and not able to stand against the power of their convictions, do set themselves by innumerable *perplexing* ways and duties to keep *down* sin, but being strangers to the *spirit* of God, all in vain. They *combat* without victory, have *war* without *peace*, and are in slavery all their days. They spend their *strength* for that which is not *bread*, and their *labour* for that which *profiteth* not.

This is the saddest warfare that any poor creature can be engaged in; a soul under the *power* of conviction from the law, is pressed to fight against sin, but hath no strength for the combat. They cannot but *fight*, and they can never conquer; they are like men thrust on the sword of enemies, on purpose to be slain. The *law* drives them on, and sin beats them back. Sometimes they think indeed that they have foiled sin; when they have only raised a *dust*, that they see it not; that is, they distemper their natural affections of fear, sorrow, and anguish, which makes them believe that sin is *conquered*, when it is not touched. By that time they are cold, they must to the battle again; and the lust which they thought to be slain, appears to have had no wound.

And if the case be so sad with them who do *labour* and strive, and yet enter *not* into the kingdom; what is their condition who *despise* all this? Who are *perpetually* under the power and domination

nion of sin, and love to have it so: and are troubled at nothing but that they cannot make *sufficient provision for the flesh*, to fulfil the lusts thereof.

C H A P. IV.

The last principle; of the usefulness of mortification. The vigour and comfort of our spiritual life depend on our mortification. In what sense. Not absolutely and necessarily. Psal. 88. Heman's Condition. Not as on the next and immediate cause. As a means: by removing of the contrary. The desperate effects of unmortified lust: it weakens the soul; Psal. xxxviii. 3, 8. sundry ways: and darkens it. All graces improved by the mortification of sin. The best evidence of sincerity.

THE last principle I shall insist on, omitting, 1. The necessity of mortification unto life: And, 2. The certainty of life upon mortification; is,

That the life, vigour, and comfort of our spiritual life depends much on our mortification of sin.

Strength, and comfort, and power, and peace in our walking with God, are the things of our desires. Were any of us asked seriously, What is it that troubles us, we must refer it to one of these heads: either we want *strength*, or *power*, *vigour* and *life*, in our *obedience*, in our *walking with God*; or we want *peace*, *comfort*, and *consolation* therein. Whatever it is, that may befall a *believer*, that doth not belong to one of these *two heads*, doth not deserve to be mentioned in the *days of our complaints*. Now all these do much depend on a *constant course of mortification*; concerning which observe,

1. I do not say they *proceed* from it; as though they

SIN in BELIEVERS.

they were *necessarily* tied to it. A man may be carried on in a *constant* course of *mortification* all his days, and yet perhaps never enjoy a good day of peace and consolation. So it was with *Heman*, *Psal.* lxxxviii. His life was a life of *perpetual mortification*, and walking with God, yet *terrors* and *wounds* were his portion all his days: But God singled out *Heman* (a choice friend) to make him an example to them that afterwards should be in distress. Canst thou complain if it be no otherwise with thee than it was with *Heman*, that eminent servant of God? And this shall be his praise to the end of the world; God makes it his prerogative to speak peace and consolation: *Isa.* lvii. 18, 19. I will do that work, says God; I will comfort him, v. 18. But how? By an immediate work of the *new creation*, I create it, says God. The use of *means* for the obtaining of *peace* is ours; the *bestowing* of it is God's *prerogative*.

2. In the ways instituted by God for to give us *life, vigour, courage and consolation, mortification* is not one of the immediate causes of it. They are the *privileges* of our *adoption*, made known to our souls, that give us *immediately* these things. *The Spirit bearing witness with our spirits that we are the children of God*: giving us a *new name*, and a *white-stone*; adoption and justification, that is, as to the sense and knowledge of them, are the immediate causes (in the hand of the Spirit) of these things. But this I say,

3. In our *ordinary walking* with God, and in an *ordinary* course of his *dealing with us*, the *vigour* and *comfort* of our spiritual lives depends much on our *mortification*, not only as a *causa sine qua non*, but as a thing that hath an effectual influence thereinto. For,

First, This alone keeps sin from *depriving* us of the *one* and the *other*: every *unmortified* sin will certainly do *two things*:

1. It

1. It will *weaken* the soul, and deprive it of its *vigour*.

2. It will *darken* the soul, and deprive it of its comfort and peace.

(1.) It *weakens* the soul, and deprives it of its strength: when *David* had for a while *harboured* an unmortified lust in his heart, it broke all his *bones*, and left him no spiritual *strength*; hence he complained that he was *sick, weak, wounded, faint*; there is (saith he) no soundness in me, *Psal. xxxviii. 3. I am feeble and sore broken, ver. 8. Yea I cannot so much as look up, Psal. xl. 12.* An unmortified lust will drink up the spirit, and all the vigour of the soul, and weaken it for all duties. For,

1. It *untunes* and unframes the heart itself, by entangling its affections. It diverts the heart from that spiritual frame that is required for *vigorous* communion with God. It lays hold on the affections, rendering its object beloved and desirable; so expelling the *love of the Father*, 1 *Job. ii. 1. Chap. iii. 17.* So that the soul cannot say *up-rightly* and truly to God, thou art my *portion*, having something else that it loves. Fear, desire, hope, which are the choice affections of the soul, that should be full of God, will be one way or other entangled with it.

2. It fills the *thoughts* with *contrivances* about it. Thoughts are the great *purveyors* of the soul, to bring in *provision* to satisfy its affections; and if sin remain *unmortified* in the heart, they must ever and anon be making provision for the *flesh*, to fulfil the lusts thereof. They must *glaze, adorn, and dress* the *objects* of the flesh, and bring them home to give satisfaction. And this they are able to do, in the service of a defiled imagination, beyond all expression.

3. It *breaks out* and actually *binds* duty. The *ambitious* man must be *studying*, and the *worldling* must

must be working or contriving, and the *sensual* vain person providing himself for *vanity*, when they should be engaged in the worship of God.

Were this my present business, to set forth the breaches, ruin, weakness, desolations, that one *unmortified lust* will bring upon a soul, this discourse must be extended much beyond my intendment.

(2.) As sin *weakens*, so it *darkens* the soul. It is a *cloud*, a *thick cloud*, that spreads itself over the face of the soul, and intercepts all the *beams* of God's love and favour. It takes away all sense of the privilege of our adoption: and if the soul begins to gather up thoughts of *consolation*, sin quickly scatters them. Of which afterwards.

Now in this regard doth the *vigour* and *power* of our *spiritual life* depend on our *mortification*. It is the only means of the removal of that, which will allow us neither the *one* nor the *other*. Men that are *sick* and *wounded* under the power of *lust*, make many applications for help; they cry to God, when the perplexity of their thoughts overwhelms them; *even to God* do they cry, but are not delivered; in vain do they use *many remedies*, *they shall not be healed*. So *Hos. v. 13*. *Ephraim saw his sickness, and Judah his wound*, and attempted fundry remedies, nothing will do, until they come (*v. 15.*) to *acknowledge their offence*. Men may see their sickness and wounds, but yet if they make not due applications their cure will not be effected.

Secondly, mortification prunes all the *graces* of God, and makes *room* for them in our hearts, to grow. The life and vigour of our *spiritual lives* consists in the vigour and flourishing of the plants of grace in our hearts. Now as you may see in a *garden*, let there be a precious *herb* planted, and let the ground be untilled, and *weeds* grow about it, perhaps it will *live* still, but be a poor *withering*,

ing, unuseful thing ; you must look and search for it, and sometimes can scarce find it ; and when you do, you can scarce know it, whether it be the plant you look for or no ; and suppose it be, you can make no use of it at all : when let another of the same kind be set in ground, naturally as barren and bad as the other ; but let it be well weeded, and every thing that is noxious and hurtful removed from it, it flourishes and thrives ; you may see it at first look into the garden, and have it for your use when you please. So it is with the graces of the Spirit that are planted in our hearts : that is true ; they are still, they abide in a heart where there is some neglect of mortification, but they are ready to die ; Revel. iii. 2. they are withering and decaying. The heart is like the sluggard's field, so over-grown with weeds, that you can scarce see the good corn. Such a man may search for faith, love and zeal, and scarce be able to find any ; and if he do discover that these graces are there, yet alive, and sincere ; yet they are so weak, so clogged with lusts, that they are of very little use ; they remain indeed, but are ready to die. But now let the heart be cleansed by mortification, the weeds of lust constantly and daily rooted up, (as they spring daily, nature being their proper soil,) let room be made for grace to thrive and flourish ; how will every grace act its part, and be ready for every use and purpose !

Thirdly, as to our *peace* : as there is nothing that hath any evidence of *sincerity* without it, so I know nothing that hath such an evidence of *sincerity* in it ; which is no small foundation of our peace : mortification is the *soul's* vigorous opposition to *self* ; wherein sincerity is most evident.

C H A P. V.

The principal intendment of the whole discourse proposed. The first main case of conscience stated. What it is to mortify any sin, negatively considered. Not the utter destruction of it in this life. Not the dissimulation of it. Not the improvement of any natural principle. Not the diversion of it. Not an occasional conquest. Occasional conquests of sin, what, and when. Upon the eruption of sin, in time of danger or trouble.

THESE things being premised, I come to my principal intention, of handling some questions, or practical cases, that present themselves in this business of mortification of sin in believers: the first, which is the head of all the rest, and whereunto they are reduced, may be considered as lying under the ensuing proposal.

Suppose a man to be a true believer, and yet finds in himself a powerful indwelling sin, leading him captive to the law of it, consuming his heart with trouble, perplexing his thoughts, weakening his soul, as to duties of communion with God, disquieting him as to peace, and perhaps defiling his conscience, and exposing him to hardening through the deceitfulness of sin; what shall he do? What course shall he take and insist on, for the mortification of this sin, lust, distemper, or corruption, to such a degree, as that though it be not utterly destroyed, yet in his contest with it, he may be enabled to keep up power, strength and peace, in communion with God?

In answer to this important enquiry, I shall do these things.

D

1. Shew

1. Shew what it is to *mortify* any sin ; and that both *negatively* and *positively*, that we be not mistaken in the foundation.

2. Give *general directions* for such things, as without which it will be utterly impossible for any one to get any sin truly and spiritually mortified.

3. Draw out the particulars whereby this is to be done; in the whole carrying on this *consideration*, that it is not of the *doctrine of mortification* in general, but only in reference to the particular case before proposed, that I am treating.

1. To *mortify* a sin, is not utterly to *kill*, root it out, and destroy it, that it should have no more hold at all, nor *residence* in our hearts. It is true, this is that which is aimed at, but this is not in this life to be accomplished. There is no man that truly sets himself to *mortify* any sin, but he *aims* at, intends, desires its utter destruction ; that it should leave neither *root* nor *fruit* in the heart or life. He would so *kill* it, that it should never *move* or *stir* any more ; *cry* or *call*, *seduce* or *tempt* to eternity. Its *not being*, is the thing aimed at. Now though doubtless there may, by the spirit and grace of Christ, a *wonderful success* and eminency of *victory* against any sin be attained ; so that a man may have almost constant *triumph* over it ; yet an utter *killing* and *destruction* of it, that it should *not be*, is not in this life to be expected. This Paul assures us of, *Phil. iii. 12.* *Not as though I had already attained, or were already perfect.* He was a *choice saint*, a pattern for believers, who in *faith* and *love*, and all the fruits of the Spirit, had not his fellow in the world ; and on that account ascribes *perfection* to himself, in comparison of others, *ver. 15.* Yet he had not *attained*, he was not *perfect*, but was following after : still a *wile body* he had, and we have, that must be changed by the great power of Christ at last : *ver.*

21. This we would have, but God sees it best for us, that we should be complete in nothing in ourselves; that in all *things* we might be complete in Christ, which is best for us, *Col. ii. 10.*

2. I think I need not say, it is not the *disimulation* of a sin; when a man on some outward respects forsakes the practice of any sin, men perhaps may *look* on him as a changed man; God knows that to his former *iniquity* he hath added cursed *hypocrisy*, and is got in a safer path to hell than he was in before. He hath got another heart than he had, that is more cunning, not a new heart, that is more holy.

3. The mortification of sin consists not in the improvement of a *quiet, sedate, nature*. Some men have an advantage by their *natural constitution*, so far, as that they are not *exposed* to such violence of *unruly passions*, and *tumultuous affections*, as many others are. Let now these men *cultivate* and improve their *natural frame* and temper, by *discipline*, consideration and *prudence*, and they may seem to themselves and others, very *mortified men*, when perhaps their hearts are a standing *sink* of all abominations; one man is never so much troubled all his life perhaps with *anger* and *passion*, nor doth trouble *others*, as another is almost every day; and yet the latter have done more to the mortification of the sin, than the former. Let not such persons try their mortification by such things as their *natural temper* gives no life or vigour to: let them bring themselves to *self-denial*, *unbelief*, *envy*, or some such *spiritual sin*, and they will have a better view of themselves.

4. A sin is not *mortified*, when it is only *diverted*. *Simon Magus*, for a season, left his *sorceries*; but his *covetousness* and *ambition* that set him on work, remained still, and would have been acting another way: therefore *Peter* tells him, *I*

perceive thou art in the gall of bitterness; notwithstanding the profession thou hast made, notwithstanding thy relinquishment of thy *sorceries*, thy lust is as powerful as ever in thee: the same lust, only the streams of it are diverted: it now exerts and puts forth itself another way, but it is the old gall of bitterness still. A man may be sensible of a lust, set himself against the eruptions of it, take care that it shall not break forth, as it hath done; but in the mean time suffer the same corrupted habit to vent itself some other way. As he who heals and skins a running sore, thinks himself cured, but in the mean time his flesh festereth by the corruption of the same humour, and breaks out in another place. And this diversion, with the alterations that attend it, often befalls men, on accounts wholly foreign unto grace; change of the course of life that a man was in; of relations, interests, designs, may effect it; yea the very alterations in mens constitutions, occasioned by a natural progress in the course of their lives, may produce such changes as these; men in age do not usually persist in the pursuit of youthful lusts, although they have never mortified any one of them. And the same is the case of bartering of lusts; and leaving to serve one, that a man may serve another. He that changes pride for worldliness, sensuality for Pharisaism, vanity in himself to the contempt of others; let him not think that he hath mortified the sin that he seems to have left. He hath changed his master, but is a servant still.

5. Occasional conquests of sin do not amount to a mortifying of it.

There are two occasions or seasons, wherein a man who is contending with any sin, may seem to himself to have mortified it.

(1.) When it hath had some sad eruption to the disturbance of his peace, terror of his conscience, dread

dread of *scandal*, and evident provocation of *God*. This awakens and stirs up all that is in the man, and *amazes* him; fills him with *abhorrency* of sin, and *himself* for it; sends him to God, makes him *cry out* as for life, to abhor his lust as *hell*, and to set himself against it. The whole man, *spiritual* and *natural* being now awaked, sin *shrinks* in its head, *appears* not, but lies as dead before him. As when one that hath drawn nigh to an *army* in the night, and hath killed a *principal person*; instantly the *guards* awake, men are *roused up*, and strict enquiry is made after the enemy; who in the mean time, until the noise and tumult be over, hides himself, or lies like one that is dead, yet with firm resolution to do the like mischief again, upon the like opportunity. Upon the sin among the *Corinthians*, see how they *muster up* themselves for the *surprizal* and destruction of it, 2 *Epist. chap. vii. ver. 11*. So it is in a person, when a breach hath been made upon his conscience, quiet, perhaps *credit*, by his lust, in some *eruption* of actual sin; *carefulness*, *indignation*, *desire*, *fear*, *revenge*, are all set on work about it, and against it, and lust is *quiet* for a season, being run down before them; but when the *hurry* is over, and the *inquest* past, the *thief* appears again alive, and is as busy as ever at his work.

(2.) In a time of some *judgment*, *calamity*, or pressing *affliction*; the heart is then taken up with thoughts and *contrivances* of *flying* from the present troubles, *fears* and *dangers*: this, as a *convinced person* concludes, is to be done, only by *relinquishment of sin*, which gains peace with God. It is the anger of God in every affliction that galls a convinced person. To be quit of this, men resolve at such times against their sins. *Sin shall never more have any place in them; they will never again give up themselves to the service of it.*

cordingly sin is quiet, stirs not, seems to be mortified; not indeed that it hath received any one wound, but meerly because the soul hath possessed its faculties whereby it should exert itself, with thoughts inconsistent with the *motions* thereof; which when they are laid aside, sin returns again to its former life and vigour. So they *Psal. lxxviii. 32. unto 38.* are a full instance and description of this frame of spirit whereof I speak.

For all this they sinned still, and believed not for his wonderful works:

Therefore their days did he consume in vanity, and their years in trouble.

When he slew them, then they sought him, and they returned, and enquired early after God.

And they remembered that God was their rock, and the high God their redeemer.

Nevertheless they did flatter him with their mouth, and they lied unto him with their tongues.

For their heart was not right with him, neither were they stedfast in his covenant.

I no way doubt, but that when they sought, and returned, and enquired early after God, they did it with full purpose of heart, as to the relinquishment of their sins: it is expressed in the word returned. To turn or return to the Lord, is by a relinquishment of sin. This they did early, with earnestness, and diligence; but yet their sin was unmortified for all this, *ver. 36, 37.* and this is the state of many humiliations in the days of affliction; and a great deceit in the hearts of believers themselves, lies oftentimes herein.

These and many other ways there are, whereby poor souls deceive themselves, and suppose they have mortified their lusts, when they live and are mighty, and on every occasion break forth to their disturbance and disquietness.

C H A P. VI.

The mortification of sin in particular described. The several parts and degrees thereof. 1. The habitual weakening of its root and principle. The power of lust to tempt. Differences of that power to persons and times. 2. Constant fighting against sin. The parts thereof considered. 3. Success against it. The sum of this discourse.

WHAT it is to mortify a sin in general, which will make farther way for particular directions, is next to be considered.

The mortification of a lust consists in three things.

1. An *habitual* weakening of it. Every lust is a depraved *habit* or disposition, continually inclining the heart to evil: thence is that description of him who hath no lust truly mortified: *Gen. vi. 5. Every imagination of the thoughts of his heart is only evil continually.* He is always under the power of a strong bent and inclination to sin. And the reason why a *natural man* is not always, perpetually, in the pursuit of some *one lust* night and day, is, because he hath *many* to serve, every one crying to be satisfied; thence he is carried on with great *variety*, but still in general he lies towards the satisfaction of *self*.

We will suppose then the *lust* or distemper whose mortification is inquired after, to be in itself a *strong, deeply rooted, habitual* inclination and bent of will and affections unto some actual sin, as to the matter of it, (though not under that *formal* consideration,) always stirring up *imagination, thoughts and contrivances* about the object of it. Hence men are said to have their hearts *set* upon evil, *Rom. xiii. 14.* the bent of their spirits lies towards

towards it, to make *provision for the flesh*. And a *sinful depraved habit* (as in many other things, so in this) differs from all *natural* or *moral habits* whatever; for whereas they incline the soul gently and suitably to itself, *sinful* habits impel with violence and impetuoufness:

whence lusts are said to *fight* or *Στεγτεύονται κατὰ*
wage war against the soul, *τῆς ψυχῆς. ἀντίσθ-*
1 Pet. ii. 11. to rebel, or rise *τενόμενον. ἀρχμα-*
up in war with that conduct *ἀντίσθοντα.*
 and opposition which is usual
 therein; *Rom. vii. 23. to lead captive, or effectually*
captivating upon success in battle: all works
of great violence and impetuoufness.

I might manifest fully from that *description* we have of it, *Rom. vii.* How it will darken the mind, extinguish *convictions*, dethrone reason, *interrupt* the power and influence of any considerations that may be brought to hamper it, and break through all into a flame. But this is not my present business. Now the first thing in *mortification* is the *weakening* of this *habit* of sin or lust, that it shall not with that *violence, earnestness, frequency, rise up, conceive, tumultuate, provoke, entice, disquiet*, as naturally it is apt to do, *Jam. i. 14, 15.*

I shall desire to give one *caution* or rule by the way; and it is this. Though every lust doth in its own nature, *equally, universally* incline and impel to sin, yet this must be granted with these two limitations:

1. One *lust*, or a *lust* in one man, may receive many accidental improvements, *heightnings*, and *strengthenings*, which may give it *life, power and vigour*, exceedingly above what another lust hath, or the *same lust*, that is of the same kind and nature in another man. When a lust falls in with the *natural constitution and temper*, with a *suitable course*
 of

of life, with *occasions*; or when Satan hath got a fit *handle* to it to manage it, as he hath a thousand ways so to do, that lust grows violent and impetuous above others, or more than the *same* lust in another man; then the *steams* of it darken the mind, so that though a man *knows* the same things as formerly, yet they have no power, nor influence on the will, but corrupt affections and passions are set by it at liberty.

But especially, lust gets strength by *temptation*; when a suitable temptation falls in with a lust, it gives it a new life, vigour, power, *violence* and rage which it seemed not before to have, or to be capable of. Instances to this purpose might be multiplied; but it is the design of some part of another treatise to evince this observation.

2. Some *lusts* are far more *sensible* and *discernible* in their violent actings than others. Paul puts a difference between uncleanness and all other sins. 1 Cor. vi. 18. *Flee fornication, every sin that a man doth, is without the body, but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body.* Hence the motions of that sin are more *sensible*, more *discernible* than of others; when perhaps, the *love of the world*, or the like, is in a person no less *habitually* predominant than that, yet it makes not so great a *combustion* in the whole man.

And on this account some men may go in their own thoughts and in the eyes of the world, for *mortified* men; who yet have in them no less predominancy of lust, than those who cry out with astonishment upon the account of its perplexing tumultuatings. Yea than those who have by the power of it, been hurried into scandalous sins; only their *lusts* are in and about things which raise not such a tumult in the soul, about which they are exercised with a calmer frame of spirit; the
very

very fabrick of nature being not so nearly concerned in them, as in some other.

I say then, that the first thing in mortification is the *weakening* of this habit, that it shall not impel and tumultuate as formerly, that it shall not intice and draw aside, that it shall not *disquiet* and *perplex*; the killing of its *life*, vigour, promptness and readiness to be stirring. This is called *crucifying the flesh with the lusts thereof*, Gal. v. 24. that is, taking away its *blood and spirits* that give it strength and power. The *wasting* of the *body of death* day by day, 2 Cor. iv. 16.

As a man *nailed* to the *cross*; he first struggles and strives and cries out with great strength and might; but as his *blood and spirits* waste, his *strivings* are *faint* and *seldom*, his *cries* *low* and *hoarse*, scarce to be heard. When a man first sets on a lust or distemper, to deal with it, it *struggles* with great *violence* to break loose; it cries with earnestness and impatiency to be *satisfied* and *relieved*; but when by *mortification* the *blood and spirits* of it are *let out*, it moves *seldom* and *familiarly*, cries *sparingly*, and is scarce heard in the *heart*; it may have sometimes a *dying pang*, that makes an appearance of great *vigour* and *strength*, but it is *quickly over*, especially if it be kept from *considerable success*. This the apostle describes as in the whole chapter, so especially *ver. 6. of chap. vi. Romans.*

Sin, saith he, is *crucified*; it is fastened to the *cross*; to what end? That the *body of death* may be *destroyed*; the power of sin weakened and abolished by little and little; that *henceforth* we should not *serve sin*, that is, that sin might not incline, impel us with such efficacy, as to *make us servants* to it, as it hath done heretofore. And this is spoken not only with respect to *carnal* and *sensual* affections,

tions, or desires of worldly things; not only in respect of the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the *pride* of life, but also as to the *flesh*, that is in the *mind* and *will*, in that opposition unto God, which is in us by nature. Of what nature soever the troubling distemper be, by what ways soever it make itself out, either by *impelling* to evil, or *binding* from that which is good, the rule is the same. And unless this be done effectually, all after-contention will not compass the end aimed at. A man may beat down the *bitter* fruit from an *evil* tree, until he is weary; whilst the root abides in strength and vigour, the beating down of the present fruit will not hinder it from bringing forth more; this is the folly of some men; they set themselves with all earnestness and diligence against the appearing eruption of *lust*, but leaving the principle and root *untouched*, perhaps unsearched out, they make but little or no progress in this work of mortification.

2. In constant *fighting* and *contending* against sin. To be able always to be *laying load* on sin, is no small *degree of mortification*. When sin is *strong* and *vigorous*, the soul is scarce able to *make any head* against it. It *sighs*, and *groans*, and *mourns*, and is troubled, as *David* speaks of himself, but seldom has sin in the *pursuit*; *David* complains that his sin had taken *fast hold upon him*, that he could not look up, Psal. xl. 12. How little then was he able to fight against it? Now sundry things are *required* unto, and *comprised* in this fighting against sin.

1. To *know* that a man hath such an enemy to deal with; to take notice of it, to consider it as an *enemy* indeed, and one that is to be destroyed by all means possible, is required hereunto. As I said before, the contest is *vigorous* and *hazardous*; it is about the things of *eternity*. When therefore
men

men have *slight* and transient thoughts of their *lusts*, it is no great *sign* that they are *mortified*, or that they are in a way for their mortification. This is, every man's knowing *the plague of his own heart*, 1 Kings viii. 38. Without which no other work can be done; it is to be feared that very many have little knowledge of the main *enemy*, that they carry about them in their bosoms. This makes them ready to justify themselves, and to be impatient of reproof or admonition, not knowing that they are in any danger, 2 Chron. xvi. 10.

2. To labour to be acquainted with the ways, wiles, methods, advantages and occasions of its *success* is the beginning of this *warfare*. So do men deal with enemies. They enquire out their *counsels* and *designs*, ponder their ends, consider how and by what *means* they have formerly *prevailed*, that they may be prevented; in this consists the greatest *skill* in conduct. Take this away, and all *waging* of war (wherein is the greatest improvement of human *wisdom* and industry) would be *brutish*. So do they deal with lust, who mortify it indeed; not only when it is actually *vexing*, *inticing*, and *seducing*, but in their retirements they consider, this is our enemy, this is his way and progress, these are his advantages, thus hath he prevailed, and thus he will do, if not prevented: So David, *My sin is ever before me*, Psal. li. 2. And indeed one of the choicest and most eminent parts of *practically* spiritual wisdom, consists in finding out the subtleties, policies, and depths of any indwelling sin; to consider, and know wherein its greatest *strength* lies; what advantage it uses to make of occasions, opportunities, temptations; what are its *pleas*, pretences, reasonings; what its stratagems, colours, excuses; to set the *wisdom* of the Spirit against the craft of the *old man*, to trace this serpent in all its turnings and windings;

to be able to say at its most secret, and (to a common frame of heart) imperceptible actings, this is your old way and course, I know what you aim at; and so to be always in readiness, is a good part of our warfare.

3. To load it daily with all the things which shall after be mentioned, that are *grievous, killing and destructive* to it, is the height of this *contest*; such an one never thinks his *lust dead* because it is quiet, but labours still to give it new *wounds, new blows* every day. So the apostle, *Col. iii. 5.*

Now whilst the soul is in this condition, whilst it is thus dealing, it is certainly *uppermost*, sin is under the sword and *dying*.

3. In *success*; frequent *success* against any *lust*, is another part and evidence of *mortification*; by *success*, I understand not a meer disappointment of sin, that it be not *brought forth*, nor accomplished; but a *victory* over it, and pursuit of it to a *complete conquest*: for instance, when the heart finds *sin* at any time at work, *seducing, forming imaginations* to make *provision* for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof, it instantly apprehends sin, and brings it to the *law of God, and love of Christ*; *condemns* it, *follows* it with *execution* to the uttermost.

Now I say, when a man comes to this *state* and condition, that *lust* is *weakened* in the *root* and *principle*, that its *motions and actions* are *fewer and weaker* than formerly, so that they are not able to hinder his *duty*, nor interrupt his peace, when he can in a quiet *sedate* frame of spirit, *find out*, and fight against sin, and have *success* against it, then sin is *mortified* in some considerable *measure*, and notwithstanding all its opposition, a man may have peace with God all his days.

Unto these heads then do I refer the *mortification* aimed at; that is, of any one *perplexing distemper*,

E

whereby

The MORTIFICATION of

whereby the general *pravity* and corruption of our nature *attempts* to exert and put forth itself.

1. First, the *weakening* of its indwelling *disposition*, whereby it *inclines, intices, impels* to evil, *rebels, opposes, fights* against God, by the *implanting* habitual *residence*, and cherishing of a *principle* of grace, that stands in direct *opposition* to it, and is destructive of it, is the foundation of it. So by the *implanting and growth* of *humility* is *pride* weakened, *passion* by *patience*, *uncleanness* by *purity* of mind and conscience, *love* of this world by *heavenly-mindedness*, which are *graces* of the spirit, or the same *habitual* grace variously acting itself by the Holy Ghost, according to the *variety* or diversity of the *objects* about which it is exercised; as the other are *several* lusts, or the same *natural corruption* variously acting itself according to the various advantages and occasions that it meets withal.

2. The *promptness, alacrity, vigour* of the Spirit, or *new man*, in contending with, cheerful fighting against the lust spoken of, by all the ways, and with all the means that are appointed thereunto, constantly using the *succours* provided against its *motions* and *actings*, is a second thing hereunto required.

3. *Success*, unto *several degrees*, attends these two. Now this, if the distemper hath not an *inconquerable* advantage from its natural situation, may possibly be to such an *universal* conquest, as the soul may never more sensibly feel its opposition, and shall however assuredly arise to an allowance of *peace* to the *conscience*, according to the tenor of the *covenant* of grace.

C H A P. VII.

General rules, without which no lust will be mortified.

No mortification unless a man be a believer. Dangers of attempting mortification of sin by unregenerate persons. The duty of unconverted persons, as to this business of mortification, considered. The vanity of the papists attempts, and rules for mortification thence discovered.

THE ways and means whereby a soul may proceed to the mortification of any particular lust and sin, which Satan takes advantage by, to disquiet and weaken him, comes next under consideration.

Now there are some general considerations to be premised, concerning some principles and foundations of this work, without which no man in the world, be he never so much raised by convictions, and resolved for the mortification of any sin, can attain thereunto.

General rules and principles, without which no sin will be ever mortified, are these:

1. Unless a man be a *believer*, that is, one that is truly *ingrafted* into Christ, he can never mortify any one sin; I do not say, unless he *know* himself to be so, but unless *indeed* he be so. Mortification is the work of *believers*, Rom. viii. 13. *If ye through the Spirit, &c. Ye believers*, to whom there is no condemnation, ver. 1. They alone are exhorted to it. Col. iii. 5. *Mortify therefore your members that are upon the earth. Who should mortify?* You who are *risen with Christ*, ver. 1. whose life is *hid with Christ in God*, ver. 3. who shall *appear with him in glory*, ver. 4. An *unregenerate* man may do something like it, but the

work itself, so as it may be *acceptable* with God, he can never perform. You know what a picture of it is drawn in some of the *philosophers*, *Seneca*, *Tully*, *Epietetus*; what affectionate discourses they have of *contempt* of the world, and self, of *regulating* and *conquering* all *exorbitant* affections and passions. The lives of most of them manifested, that their *maxims* differed as much from true mortification, as the *sun* painted on a *sign-post*, from the *sun* in the *firmament*. They had neither light nor heat. Their own *Lucian* sufficiently manifests what they *all* were. There is no death of sin, without the *death* of Christ. You know what attempts there are made after it by the *Papists*, in their *vows*, *penances*, and *satisfactions*; I dare say of them (I mean as many of them as act upon the principles of their church, as they *call* it,) what *Paul* says of *Israel* in point of *righteousness*, Rom. ix. 31, 32. They have *followed* after mortification, but they have not attained to it; wherefore? Because they *seek* it not by *faith*, but as it were by the *works* of the law. The same is the state and condition of all amongst ourselves, who in obedience to their convictions, and *awakened* consciences, do attempt a relinquishment of sin; they follow *after* it, but they do not attain it.

It is true, it *is*, it *will* be required of every person whatever, that hears the *law* or *gospel* preached, that he *mortify* sin; it is his *duty*, but it is not his *immediate* duty; it is his *duty* to do it, but to do it in God's way. If you require your servant to pay so much money for you in such a place, but first to go and take it up in another; it is his duty to pay the money appointed, and you will *blame* him if he do it not; yet it was not his *immediate* duty; he was first to *take* it up, according to your *direction*. So it is in this case; sin

is to be *mortified*, but something is to be done in the *first place* to enable us thereunto.

I have *proved*, that it is the *Spirit* alone that can *mortify* sin; he is *promised* to do it, and all other means without him are *empty* and *vain*. How shall he then *mortify* sin, that hath not the *Spirit*? A man may *easier see* without *eyes*, *speak* without a *tongue*, than truly *mortify* one sin without the *Spirit*. Now how is he attained? It is the *Spirit* of Christ; and (as the apostle says) if we *have not the spirit of Christ, we are none of his*, Rom. viii. 9. So, if we are *Christ's*, have an *interest* in him; we have the *Spirit*, and so alone have power for mortification. This the apostle discourses at large, Rom. viii. v. 8. So then they that are in the *flesh* cannot please God. It is the inference and conclusion he makes of his foregoing discourse about our natural state and condition, and the *enmity* we have unto God and his *law* therein. If we are in the *flesh*, if we have not the *Spirit*, we cannot do any thing that should please God. But what is our deliverance from this condition, ver. 9. But ye are not in the *flesh*, but in the *Spirit*, if so be that the *spirit of God dwell in you*: ye believers, that have the *Spirit of Christ*, ye are not in the *flesh*. There is no way of deliverance from the state and condition of *being in the flesh*, but by the *spirit of Christ*; and what if this *spirit of Christ* be in you? Why then you are *mortified*, ver. 10. the body is *dead because of sin*, or unto it; mortification is carried on; the new man is *quickened* to righteousness. This the apostle proves, ver. 11, from the *union* we have with Christ by the *Spirit*, which will produce *suitable operations* in us, to what it wrought in him. All attempts then for mortification of any lust, without an interest in Christ, are *vain*. Many men that are *galled* with and for sin, (the *arrows of Christ* for conviction by the preaching of

the word, or some affliction having been made *sharp* in their hearts) do *vigourously* set themselves against this or that particular *lust*, wherewith their consciences have been most *disquieted* or *perplexed*. But poor creatures! they labour in the fire, and their *work* consumeth. When the *spirit* of Christ comes to this work, he will be as *refiners fire*, and as *fullers soap*, and he will purge men as *gold* and *silver*, Mal. iii. 3. take away their *dross* and *tin*, their *filth* and *blood*, as Isa. iv. 3. But men must be *gold* and *silver* in the bottom, or else refining will do them no good. The *prophet* gives us the *sad* issue of *wicked* mens utmost attempts for *mortification*, by what means soever that God affords them, Jer. vi. 29, 30. *The bellows are burnt, and the lead is consumed of the fire, the founder melteth in vain, reprobate silver shall men call them, because the Lord hath rejected them*; and what is the reason hereof? v. 28. they were *brass* and *iron* when they were put into the furnace. Men may refine *brass* and *iron* long enough before they will be good *silver*.

I say then, *mortification* is not the *present* business of *unregenerate* men. God calls them not to it as yet. *Conversion* is their work. The *conversion* of the *whole* soul, not the *mortification* of *this* or *that* particular *lust*. You would *laugh* at a man that you should see setting up a *great* *fabrick*, and never take any care for a *foundation*; especially if you should see him so *foolish*, as that having a *thousand* experiences, that what he built one day, fell down another, he would yet continue in the same course. So it is with convinced persons; though they plainly see that what *ground* they get against *sin* one day, they lose *another*, yet they will go on in the same road still, without enquiring where the *destructive* *flaw* in their progress lies. When the *Jews* upon the *conviction* of their *sin* were cut to the *heart*,

heart, Acts ii. 37. and cried out *what shall we do?* What doth *Peter* direct them to? Does he bid them go and mortify their pride, wrath, malice, cruelty, and the like? No, he knew that was not their present work, but he calls them to conversion and faith in Christ in general, ver. 38. Let the soul be first thoroughly converted, and then looking on him whom they had pierced, humiliation and mortification will ensue. Thus when *John* came to preach repentance and conversion, he said, the axe is now laid to the root of the tree, Mat. iii. 10. The Pharisees had been laying heavy burdens, imposing tedious duties, and rigid means of mortification, in fastings, washings, and the like, all in vain: says *John*, the doctrine of conversion is for you, the axe in my hand is laid to the root. And our Saviour tells us what is to be done in this case; says he, do men gather grapes from thorns? Matt. vi. 16. But suppose a thorn be well pruned and cut, and have pains taken with him? Yea but he will never bear figs; ver. 17, 18. It cannot be but every tree will bring forth fruit according to its own kind. What is then to be done, he tells us, Matt. xii. 33. make the tree good, and his fruit will be good: the root must be dealt with, the nature of the tree changed, or no good fruit will be brought forth.

This is that I aim at, unless a man be regenerate, unless he be a believer, all attempts that he can make for mortification, be they never so specious and promising, all means he can use, let him follow them with never so much diligence, earnestness, watchfulness and contention of mind and spirit, are to no purpose; in vain shall he use many remedies, he shall not be healed. Yea there are sundry desperate evils attending an endeavour in convinced persons that are no more but so, to perform this duty.

First, The *mind* and soul is taken up about that which is not the man's *proper business*, and so he is diverted from that which is so. God lays hold by his *word* and *judgments* on some *sin* in him, galls his *conscience*, disquiets his *heart*, deprives him of his *rest*; now *other* diversions will not serve his *turn*: he must apply himself to the *work* before him. The business in hand being to awake the whole man unto a consideration of the state and condition wherein he *is*, that he might be brought home to God; instead hereof, he sets himself to mortify the sin that galls him; which is a pure issue of self-love, to be freed from his *trouble*; and not at all to the *work* he is called unto; and so is diverted from it. Thus God tells us of *Ephraim*, when he spread his net upon them, and brought them down as the fowls of Heaven, and chastised them. *Hos. vii. 12.* caught them, intangled them, convinced them, that they could not escape; saith he of them, *they return, but not to the Most High*: they set themselves to a *relinquishment* of sin, but not in that manner by universal conversion as God called for it. Thus are men diverted from coming unto God, by the most glorious ways that they can fix upon to come to him by. And this is one of the most common deceits whereby men ruin their own souls; I wish that some whose trade it is to daub with untempered mortar in the things of God, did not teach this deceit, and cause the people to err by their ignorance: what do men do? What oft-times are they directed unto, when their consciences are galled by sin, and disquietment from the Lord hath laid hold upon them? Is not a relinquishment of the sin as to practice, (that they are in some fruits of it perplexed with, and making head against it,) the sum of what they apply themselves unto? And is not the gospel end of their convictions

convictions lost thereby? Here men abide and perish.

Secondly, This *duty* being a good thing in itself, in its proper place, a duty evidencing *sincerity*, bringing home *peace* to the conscience; a man finding himself *really* engaged in it, his mind and heart set against this or that sin, with *purpose* and resolution to have no more to do with it, he is ready to *conclude*, that his *state* and condition is *good*, and so to delude his *own* soul. For,

(1.) When his *conscience* hath been made sick with sin, and he could find no rest, when he should go to the *great* Physician of souls, and get *healing* in his blood; the man by this engagement against sin, pacifies and quiets his conscience, and sits down without going to Christ at all. Ah! how many *poor* souls are thus *deluded* to eternity! When *Ephraim* saw his sickness, he sent to king *Jareb*, *Hos. v. 13.* which kept him off from God. The whole bundle of the Popish religion is made up of designs and *contrivances* to pacify conscience without Christ; all described by the apostle, *Rom. x. 4.*

(2.) By this means men *satisfy* themselves that their state and condition is *good*, seeing they do that which is a work good in itself, and they do not do it to be *seen*. They know they would have the work done in *sincerity*, and so are *hardened* in a kind of *self* righteousness.

(3.) When a man hath thus for a *season* been *deluded*, and hath *deceived* his own soul, and finds in a *long* course of life, that indeed his sin is not *mortified*, or if he hath changed one, he hath gotten another; he begins at *length* to think, that all *contending* is in *vain*, he shall never be able to prevail: he is making a *dam* against *water* that increaseth on him. Hereupon he gives over, as one despairing of any success, and yields up himself to the

the power of sin, and that *habit of formality* that he hath gotten.

And this is the usual issue with persons attempting the *mortification* of sin without an *interest* in Christ first obtained. It *deludes* them, *hardens* them, *destroys* them. And therefore we see that there are not usually more vile and desperate sinners in the world, than such as having by *conviction* been put on this course, have found it fruitless, and deserted it without a discovery of Christ. And this is the substance of the religion and godliness of the choicest *formalists* in the world; and of all those who in the *Roman* synagogue are drawn to *mortification* as they drive *Indians* to baptism, or *cattle* to water. I say then, that mortification is the work of *believers*, and believers only. To *kill* sin is the work of *living* men; where men are *dead*, (as all unbelievers, the *best* of them are *dead*;) sin is *alive*, and will *live*.

2. It is the work of *faith*; the *peculiar* work of *faith*; now if there be a *work* to be done that will be effected by *one* only *instrument*, it is the greatest *madness* for any to attempt the doing of it, that hath not that instrument. Now it is *faith* that *purifies* the heart, Acts xv. 9. or as *Peter* speaks, *we purify* our souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit, 1 Pet. i. 22. And without it, it will not be done.

What hath been spoken, I suppose is sufficient to make good my first general rule: *be sure to get an interest in Christ, if you intend to mortify any sin, without it it will never be done.*

Ob. You will say, what then would you have *unregenerate* men, that are convinced of the evil of sin do? Shall they cease *striving* against sin, live *dissolutely*, give their lusts their *swing*, and be as bad as the worst of men? This were a way to set the

the whole world into confusion, to bring all things into darkness, to set open the *flood-gates of lust*, and lay the reins upon the *necks* of men to *rush* into all sin with delight and greediness, like the *horses* into the battle.

Ans. 1. God forbid! It is to be looked on as a great issue of the wisdom, goodness, and love of God, that by manifold ways and means he is pleased to restrain the sons of men from running forth into that compass of *excess* and *riot*, which the *depravity* of their nature would carry them out unto with *violence*. By what way soever this is done, it is an issue of the *care*, *kindness*, and *goodness* of God, without which the whole earth would be an *hell* of sin and confusion.

2. There is a peculiar *convincing* power in the word, which God is oftentimes pleased to *put forth* to the wounding, *amazing*, and in some sort humbling of sinners, though they are never converted. And the word is to be *preached*, though it hath *this* end, yet not *with* this end. Let then the word be preached, and the *sins* of men rebuked, *lust* will be *restrained*, and some oppositions will be made against sin, though that be not the *effect* aimed at.

3. Though this be the *work* of the word and Spirit, and it be good in itself, yet it is not profitable nor available as to the main end in them in whom it is wrought; they are still in the *gall of bitterness*, and under the *power* of darkness.

4. Let men know it is their *duty*, but in its proper place; I take not men from *mortification*, but put them upon *conversion*. He that shall call a man from *mending* a *hole* in the wall of his *house*, to *quench* a *fire* that is consuming the whole *building*, is not his enemy. Poor soul! it is not thy *sore finger* but thy *bellic fever* that thou art to apply thyself to the consideration of. Thou settest thy-
 iclf

60 The MORTIFICATION of

Self against a *particular* sin, and dost not consider that thou art a *nothing* but sin.

Let me add this to them who are *preachers* of the sword, or intend through the good hand of God that employment. It is their duty to plead with men about their sins, to lay *load* on particular sins, but always *remember*, that it be done with that which is the proper end of law and gospel. That is, that they make use of the sin they speak against, to the *discovery* of the *state* and *condition* wherein the *sinner* is. Otherwise, happily they may work men to *formality* and *hypocrisy*, but little of the true end of preaching the gospel will be brought about. It will not *avail*, to beat a man off from his *drunkenness*, into a *sober formality*; a skilful master of the *assemblies* lays his *axe* at the root, drives still at the *heart*. To inveigh against particular sins of ignorant *unregenerate* persons, (such as the *land* is full of,) is a good work: but yet though it may be done with great *efficacy*, vigour and *success*, if this be all the *effect* of it, that they are set upon the most *sedulous* endeavours of *mortifying* their sins preached down, all that is done, is but like the beating of an *enemy* in an *open field*, and driving him into an *impregnable* castle, not to be prevailed against. Get you at any time a *sinner* at the advantage, on the account of any *one* sin whatever, have you any thing to take hold of him by, bring it to his *state* and *condition*, drive it up to the *head*, and there deal with him; to break men off from particular sins, and not to break their hearts, is to deprive ourselves of advantages of dealing with them.

And herein is the *Roman mortification* grievously *peccant*; they drive *all sorts* of persons to it, without the least consideration whether they have a *principle* for it or no. Yea they are so far from calling on men to *believe*, that they may be able

to *mortify their lusts*, that they call men to *mortification* instead of *believing*. The truth is, they neither know what it is to *believe*, nor what *mortification* itself intends. *Faith* with them is but a general *assent* to the doctrine taught in their church: and *mortification* the betaking of a man by a *vow* to some certain course of life, wherein he *denies* himself something of the use of the things of this world, not without a considerable compensation. Such men know neither the *Scriptures*, nor the *Power* of God. Their boasting of their *mortification*, is but their *glorying* in their *shame*. Some *casuists* among ourselves, who over-looking the necessity of *regeneration*, do avowedly give this for a direction to all sorts of persons, that complain of any sin or lust, that they should vow against it, at least for a season, a month or so, seem to have a scantling of *light* in the *mystery* of the gospel, much like that of *Nicodemus*, when he came first to Christ. They bid men *vow* to abstain from their *sin* for a season. This commonly makes their *lust* more impetuous: Perhaps with great *perplexity* they keep their word: perhaps not, which increases their guilt and torment. Is their sin at all *mortified* hereby? Do they find a *conquest* over it? Is their condition changed, though they attain a relinquishment of it? Are they not still in the *gall of bitterness*? Is not this to put men to make *brick*, if not without *straw*, (which is worse,) without *strength*? What promise hath any *unregenerate* man to countenance him in this work? What *assistance* for the performance of it? Can sin be killed without an interest in the *death* of Christ, or *mortified* without the Spirit? If such directions should prevail to *change* mens *lives*, as seldom they do, yet they never reach to the *change* of their *hearts* or conditions. They make men *self-justiciaries* or *hypocrites*, not Christians. It grieves me oft-times

to see poor souls, that have a zeal for God, and a desire of *eternal welfare*, kept, by such directors and directions, under a *hard, burdensome, outside* worship and service of God, with many specious endeavours for *mortification*, in an utter ignorance of the *righteousness of Christ*, and unacquaintedness with his *Spirit*, all their days. Persons and things of this kind, I know too many. If ever God *shine* into their hearts, to give them the *knowledge of his glory in the face of his Son Jesus Christ*, they will see the folly of their present way.

C H A P. VIII.

The second general rule proposed. Without universal sincerity for the mortifying of every lust, no lust will be mortified. Partial mortification always from a corrupt principle. Perplexity of temptation from a lust, oft-times a chastening for other negligences.

THE second principle, which to this purpose I shall propose, is this, *without sincerity and diligence in an universality of obedience, there is no mortification of any one perplexing lust to be obtained.* The other was to the *person*, this to the thing itself. I shall a little explain this position.

A man finds any lust to bring him into the condition formerly described, it is powerful, strong, tumultuating, *leads captive*, vexes, disquiets, takes away *peace*; he is not able to *bear it*, wherefore he fets himself *against it*, prays *against it*, groans under it, *sighs* to be delivered, but in the mean time, perhaps in other duties, in constant communion with God, in *reading, prayer and meditation*, in other ways that are not of the same kind with the *lust* wherewith he is troubled, he is *loose and negligent*.

negligent. Let not that man think that ever he shall arrive to the *mortification* of the lust he is *perplexed with*. This is a *condition* that not seldom befalls men in their *pilgrimage*. The *Israelites*, under a sense of their *sin*, drew *nigh* to God with much diligence and earnestness, with *fasting* and *prayer*. Isa. lviii. many expressions are made of their *earnestness* in the work, v. 2. *They seek me daily, and delight to know my ways, they ask of me, the ordinances of justice, they delight in approaching unto God.* But God rejects all; their *fast* is a remedy that will not *heal* them, and the reason given of it, v. 5, 6, 7, is, because they were *particular in this duty*. They attended diligently to *that*, but in others were negligent and careless. He that hath a *running sore* (it is the Scripture expression) upon him, arising from an *ill habit* of body contracted by intemperance and ill diet; let him apply himself with what *diligence* and *skill* he can, to the *cure* of his *sore*, if he leave the *general habit* of his body under distempers, his *labour* and *travail* will be in vain. So will his *attempts* be, that shall endeavour to stop a *bloody issue* of sin, and *filth* in his soul, and is not *equally* careful of his universal *spiritual temperature*, and constitution. For,

1. This kind of endeavour for *mortification*, proceeds from a *corrupt principle*, ground and foundation, so that it will never *proceed* to a good issue. The true and acceptable *principles* of mortification shall be afterward insisted on. *Hatred* of sin as sin, not only as *galling* or *disquieting*, sense of the love of Christ in the cross lies at the *bottom* of all true *spiritual* mortification. Now it is certain, that that which I speak of proceeds from *self-love*. Thou settest thyself with all *diligence* and *earnestness* to *mortify* such a lust or sin; what is the reason of it? It *disquiets* thee, it hath taken away thy *peace*, it *fills* thy heart with sorrow and trouble,

and fear, thou hast *no rest* because of it; yea but friend, thou hast *neglected prayer or reading*, thou hast *been vain and loose* in thy conversation in other things that have not been of the same *nature* with that *lust* wherewith thou art perplexed; these are no less sins and evils, than those under which thou *groanest*; Jesus Christ *bled* for them also; why dost thou not set thyself against them also? If thou *hatedst sin as sin, every evil away*, thou wouldst be no less *watchful* against every thing that *grieves* and disquiets the *spirit* of God, than against that which *grieves* and disquiets thine own soul. It is evident that thou contendest against *sin*, meerly because of thy own *trouble* by it. Would thy *conscience* be quiet under it, thou wouldst let it alone. Did it not disquiet thee, it should not be disquieted by thee. Now, canst thou think that God will set in with such *hypocritical* endeavours; that *ever his spirit* will bear *witness* to the *treachery* and *falsehood* of thy spirit? Dost thou think he will *ease* thee of that which *perplexeth* thee, that thou mayest be at liberty to that which no less *grieves* him? No, (says God,) here is *one*, if he could be rid of this *lust* I should never hear of him more, let him wrestle with this, or he is lost. Let not any man think to do his *own work*, that will not do God's. God's work consists in *universal obedience*: to be freed of the *present perplexity* is their own only. Hence is that of the apostle, 2 Cor. vii. 1. *Cleanse yourselves from all pollution of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord.* If we will do *any thing*, we must do *all things*. So then, not only an intense opposition to this or that peculiar *lust*, but it is an *universal humble* frame and temper of heart, with watchfulness over every evil, and for the performance of every *duty*, that is *accepted*.

2. How knowest thou but that God hath suffered the lust wherewith thou hast been *perplexed* to
get

get *strength* in thee, and *power* over thee, to *chasten* thee for thy other *negligences*, and common *lukewarmness* in walking before him; at least to *awaken* thee to the *consideration* of thy ways, that thou mayest make a *thorough* work and change in thy *course* of walking with him? The rage and *predominancy* of a particular lust, is commonly the *fruit* and issue of a careless, negligent *course* in general; and that upon a double account.

(1) As its *natural effect*, if I may so say. Lust (as I shewed) in general, lies in the heart of every one, even the *best*, whilst he lives; and think not that the *Scripture* speaks in vain, that it is *subtle*, *cunning*, *crafty*; that it *seduces*, *entices*, *tempts*, *rebels*. Whilst a man keeps a diligent *watch* over his heart, its root and fountain; whilst above all *keepings*, he keeps his heart, whence are the issues of life and death, lust *wITHERS* and *dies* in it. But if through *negligence* it makes an *eruption* any particular way, gets a *passage* to the *thoughts* by the *affections*, and *from* them, and *by* them, perhaps breaks out into open sin in the *conversation*, the strength of it *bears* that way it hath found out, and that way mainly it *urgeth*, until having got a *passage*, it then vexes and disquiets, and is not easily to be restrained; thus perhaps a man may be put to wrestle all his days in *sorrow*, with that, which by a strict *universal watch* might easily have been prevented.

(2) As I said, God oft-times suffers it to *chasten* our other negligences; for as with wicked men, he gives them up to *one* sin as the judgement of another, a *greater* Rom. i. 26. for the *punishment* of a *less*, or one that will hold them more *firmly* and securely, for *that* which they might have possibly obtained a deliverance from: so even with his own, he may, he doth *leave* them sometimes to some *vexatious* di-

stempers, either to prevent or cure some other evil :

So was the *messenger* of Satan let loose
2 Cor. xii. 7. on *Paul*, that he might not be lifted
up through the abundance of *spiritual*

revelations. Was it not a correction to *Peter's* vain
confidence, that he was left to *deny* his master ?

Now if this be the *state* and condition of *lust* in its
prevalency, that God often-times suffers it so
prevail, at least to *admonish* us, and to *humble* us,
perhaps to *chasten* and correct us, for our general
loose and careless walking, is it possible that the
effect should be removed, and the *cause* continued ;
that the *particular* lust should be *mortified*, and the
general course be *unreformed* ? He then that would
really, *thoroughly*, and *acceptably* mortify any dis-
quieting *lust*, let him take care to be *equally* dili-
gent in all parts of *obedience* ; and know that every
lust, every omission of duty, is *burden-*

Isa. xliii. 24. *some* to God, though but one is so to
him.. Whilst there abides a treachery

in the heart to indulge to any negligence in not
pressing universally to all perfection in obedience,
the soul is *weak*, as not giving faith its whole
work ; and *selfish*, as considering more the trouble
of sin, than the filth and guilt of it ; and lives
under a constant *provocation* of God, so that it may
not expect any comfortable issue in any spiritual
duty that it doth undertake, much less in this un-
der consideration, which requires another prin-
ciple, and frame of spirit for its accomplishment.

SIN in BELIEVERS.

C H A P. IX.

Particular directions in relation to the foregoing case proposed. First, Consider the dangerous symptoms of any lust: 1. Inveterateness. 2. Peace obtained under it; the several ways whereby that is done. 3. Frequency of success in its seductions. 4. The soul's fighting against it, with arguments only taken from the event. 5. Its being attended with judicary hardness. 6. Its withstanding particular dealings from God. The state of persons in whom these things are found.

THE foregoing general rules being supposed, particular directions to the soul, for its guidance under the sense of a disquieting lust or distemper, (being the main thing I aim at) come next to be proposed. Now of these some are previous and preparatory, and in some of them the work itself is contained. Of the first sort are these ensuing:

First, Consider what dangerous symptoms thy lust hath attending or accompanying it. Whether it hath any deadly mark on it or no: if it hath, extraordinary remedies are to be used; an ordinary course of mortification will not do it.

You will say, what are these dangerous marks and symptoms, the desperate attendances of an indwelling lust that you intend? Some of them I shall name.

(1) *Inveterateness*; if it hath lain long corrupting in thy heart, if thou hast suffered it to abide in power and prevalency, without attempting vigorously the killing of it, and the healing of the wounds thou hast received by it, for some long season, thy distemper is dangerous. Hast thou permitted

mitted *worldliness*, *ambition*, *greediness of study*, to eat up *other duties*; the *duties* wherein thou oughtest to hold *constant* communion with God, for some *long season*? Or *uncleanness* to *defile* thy heart, with *vain*, and *foolish*, and *wicked imaginations*, for many days? Thy lust hath a *dangerous symptom*. So was the case with *David*, *Psal. xxxviii. 5. My wounds stink and are corrupt, because of my foolishness.* When a lust hath lain long in the heart, corrupting, festering, cankering, it brings the soul to a woeful condition. In such a case an *ordinary* course of *humiliation* will not do the work: whatever it be, it will by this means *insinuate* itself more or less into all the faculties of the soul, and *habituate* the affections to its company and society; it grows *familiar* to the mind and conscience, that they do not startle at it as a strange thing; but are bold with it as that which they are wonted unto; yea it will get such advantage by this means, as oftentimes to exert and put *forth* itself, without having any notice taken of it at all; as it seems to have been with *Joseph* in his *swearing* by the life of *Pharaoh*. Unless some extraordinary course be taken, such a person hath no ground in the world to expect that his latter end shall be peace.

For first, how will he be able to distinguish between the long abode of an *unmortified lust*, and the *dominion* of sin which cannot befall a regenerate person? Secondly, how can he *promise* himself, that it shall ever be otherwise with him, or that his *lust* will cease *tumultuating* and seducing, when he sees it fixed and *abiding*, and hath done so for many days, and hath gone through *variety* of conditions with him? It may be it hath tried *mercies* and *afflictions*, and those possibly so remarkable, that the soul could not avoid the taking special notice of them; it may be it hath *weathered* out many a thorn; and passed under much variety of
gifts

gifts in the administration of the word; and will it prove an easy thing to dislodge an *inmate* pleading a title by prescription? Old neglected *wounds* are often *mortal*, always *dangerous*. Indwelling distempers grow *resty*, and *stubborn*, by continuance in *ease* and quiet. Lust is such an *inmate*, as, if it can plead *time* and some *prescription*, will not easily be ejected. As it never dies of itself, so if it be not daily *killed*, it will always gather strength.

(2) Secret pleas of the heart for the *countenancing* of itself, and keeping up its *peace*, notwithstanding the abiding of a lust, without a *vigorous* Gospel attempt for its mortification, is another *dangerous symptom* of a deadly distemper in the heart. Now there be several ways whereby this may be done, I shall name some of them. As,

1. When upon *thoughts*, perplexing thoughts about sin, instead of *applying* himself to the destruction of it, a man *searches* his heart to see what *evidences* he can find of a *good condition*, notwithstanding that *sin* and lust, so that it may go well with him.

For a man to gather up his *experiences* of God, to *call* them to mind, to *collect* them, consider, *try*, improve them, is an *excellent* thing; a duty *practised* by all the saints; commended in the *Old Testament* and the *New*. This was *David's* work, when he *communed with his own heart*, and called to remembrance the *former loving kindness* of the Lord, *Psal.* lxxvii. 6, 7, 8, 9. This is the duty that *Paul* sets us to practise, *2 Cor.* xiii. 5. And as it is in itself *excellent*, so it hath *beauty* added to it, by a proper season. A time of trial, or *temptation*, or disquietness of the heart about *sin*, is a *picture of silver* to set off this *golden apple*, as *Solomon* speaks: but *now*, to do it for *this end*, to satisfy conscience, which *cries* and *calls* for another purpose, is a desperate device of an heart in love with

with sin. When a man's *conscience* shall deal with him, when God shall *rebuke* him for the sinful *dis-temper* of his heart, if he, instead of applying himself to get that sin *pardoned* in the blood of Christ, and *mortified* by his spirit, shall relieve himself, by any *such other evidences* as he hath, or thinks himself to *have*, and so *disentangle* himself from under the *yoke*, that God was putting on his neck; his condition is very *dangerous*, his wound *hardly curable*. Thus the *Jews* under the *gallings* of their own *consciences*, and the convincing preaching of our *Saviour*, supported themselves with this, that they were *Abraham's children*, and on that account *accepted* with God; and so *countenanced* themselves in all abominable *wickedness* to their utter ruin.

This is in some degree, a blessing of a man's self, and saying that upon one account or other he shall have peace, *although he adds drunkenness to thirst*; love of sin, undervaluation of peace, and of all *tastes* of love from God, are enwrapped in such a frame: such a one plainly shews, that if he can but keep up *hope* of escaping the *wrath to come*, he can be well content to be unfruitful in the world, at any distance from God that is not final separation. What is to be expected from such a heart?

2. By applying grace and *mercy* to an *unmortified* sin, or one not *sincerely* endeavoured to be *mortified*, is this deceit carried on. This is a *sign* of an heart greatly entangled with the *love* of sin. When a man hath secret thoughts in his heart, not unlike those of *Naaman*, 2 Kings, v. 18. about his worshipping in the house of *Rimmon*; in all other things I will walk with God; but in this thing, *God be merciful* unto me; his condition is sad. It is true indeed, a resolution to this purpose, to indulge a man's self in any
sin

sin on the account of *mercy*, seems to be (and doubtless in any course is,) altogether inconsistent with *Christian sincerity*, and is a badge of an hypocrite, and is the turning of the grace of God into *wantonness*, *Jude* 4. but yet I doubt not but through the *craft* of Satan, and their own remaining *unbelief*, the children of God may themselves sometimes be ensnared with this deceit of sin; or else *Paul* would never have so cautioned them against it as he doth, *Rom. vi. 1, 2.* Yea indeed there is nothing more natural, than for *fleshy reasonings* to grow high and strong upon this account. The *flesh* would fain be indulged unto upon the account of grace: and every word that is spoken of *mercy*, it stands ready to catch at, and to pervert it to its own corrupt aims and purposes. To apply mercy then to a sin not vigorously mortified, is to fulfil the end of the *flesh* upon the Gospel.

These and many other ways and wiles, a *deceitful* heart will sometimes make use of, to countenance itself in its abominations. Now when a man with his *sin* is in this condition, that there is a *secret liking* of the sin prevalent in his heart, and though his *will* be not wholly set upon it, yet he hath an imperfect *velleity* towards it, he *would practise* it were it not for such and such considerations, and hereupon *relieves* himself other ways than by the mortification and pardon of it in the blood of Christ, that man's wounds *stink and are corrupt*, and he will, without speedy deliverance, be at the door of death.

(3) *Frequency of success* in sin's seduction in obtaining the prevailing consent of the will unto it, is another dangerous *symptom*. This is that I mean: when the sin spoken of gets the consent of the *will* with some *delight*, though it be not *actually* outwardly perpetrated, yet it hath success. A man may not be able upon outward considerations

to go along with sin, to that which *James* calls the *finishing* of it, *Jam. i. 14, 15.* as to the outward acts of sin, when yet the will of sinning may be actually obtained: then hath it, I say, success. Now if any *lust* be able thus far to prevail in the soul of any man, as his condition may possibly be very *bad*, and himself be *unregenerate*, so it cannot possibly be very good, but *dangerous*. And it is all *one* upon the matter, whether this be done by the choice of the will, or by inadvertency; for that *inadvertency* itself is in a manner *chosen*. When we are *inadvertent* and negligent, where we are bound to *watchfulness*, and *carefulness*, that *inadvertency* doth not take off from the *voluntariness* of what we do thereupon; for although men do not *choose* and *resolve* to be negligent and *inadvertent*, yet if they *choose* the things that will make them so, they *choose* *inadvertency* itself, as a thing may be chosen in its *cause*.

And let not men think that the evil of their hearts is in any measure *extenuated*, because they seem for the most part to be *surprised* into that consent which they seem to give unto it; for it is negligence of their duty in watching over their hearts, that betrays them into that surprisal.

(4) When a man *fighteth* against his sin only with *arguments* from the *issue*, or the *punishment* due unto it; this is a *sign* that sin hath taken great *possession* of the *will*, and that in the heart there is a *superfluity* of *naughtiness*. Such a man as *opposes* nothing to the *seduction* of sin and lust in his heart, but *fear* of *shame* among men, or *hell* from God, is sufficiently *resolved* to do the *sin*, if there were no *punishment* attending it; which what it differs from *living* in the *practice* of sin, I know not. Those who are *Christ's*, and are acted in their obedience upon *Gospel* principles, have the death of *Christ*, the *love* of God, the *detestable* nature of sin, the *preciousness*

preciousness of communion with God; a deep grounded abhorrency of sin, as *sin*, to oppose to any seduction of sin, to all the workings, strivings, fightings of lust in their hearts. So did Joseph, *How shall I do this great evil* (saith Gen. xxxix. 9. he) *and sin against the Lord*, my good and gracious God? And Paul, *The love of Christ constrains us: and having received these promises, let us* 2 Cor. v. 14. *cleanse ourselves from all pollutions of flesh and spirit.* But now if a man be so under the power of his lust, that he hath nothing but *law* to oppose it with, if he cannot *fight* against it with Gospel weapons, but deals with it altogether with *hell* and *judgment*, which are the proper arms of the *law*, it is most evident, that sin hath possessed itself of his will and affections, to a very great *prevalency* and conquest.

Such a person hath cast off (as to the particular spoken of) the conduct of *renewing* grace, and is kept from ruin only by *restraining* grace; and so far is he fallen from *grace*, and returned under the power of the *law*; and can it be thought that this is not a great provocation to Christ, that men should cast off his easy gentle yoke and rule, and cast themselves under the iron yoke of the law; meerly out of indulgence unto their lusts?

Try thyself by this also: when thou art by *sin* driven to make a *stand*, so that thou must either serve it, and *rush* at the command of it into *folly*, like the *horse into the battle*, or make *head* against it to suppress it; what dost thou say to thy soul? What dost thou expostulate with thyself? Is this all? *Hell* will be the end of this *course*, *vengeance* will meet with me, and find me out; it is time for thee to look about thee, *evil* lies at the door. Paul's main argument to evince, that sin shall not have dominion over *believers*, is, that they are not un-

der the *law*, but under grace, *Rom. vi. 14.* If thy *contendings* against sin be all on *legal* accounts, from *legal* principles and *motives*, what *assurance* canst thou attain unto, that sin shall not have dominion over thee, which will be thy *ruin*?

Yea know that this reserve will not long hold out: if thy lust hath driven thee from stronger Gospel *forts*, it will speedily prevail against this also; do not suppose that such considerations will deliver thee, when thou hast voluntarily given up to thine enemy those helps and means of preservation which have a thousand times their strength. Rest assuredly in this, that unless thou recover thyself with speed from this condition, the thing that thou fearest will come upon thee; what Gospel principles do not, *legal* motives cannot do.

(5) When it is *probable* that there is, or may be somewhat of *judiciary hardness*, or at least chastening punishment in thy lust as *disquieting*; this is another dangerous *symptom*. That God doth sometimes *leave* even those of his own, under the *perplexing* power at least of some lust or sin, to correct them for former *sins*, negligence and folly, I no way doubt. Hence was that *complaint* of the church, *why hast thou hardened us from the fear of thy name?* *Isa. lxiii. 17.* That this is his way of dealing with *unregenerate* men, no man questions. But how shall a man know whether there be any thing of God's *chastening hand*, in his being left to the disquietment of his distemper?

Ans. Examine thy *heart* and ways: what was the *state* and condition of thy *soul* before thou fellest into the intanglements of that sin which now thou so complaineest of? Hadst thou been *negligent* in duties? Hadst thou lived *inordinately* to thyself? Is there the *guilt* of any great *sin* lying upon thee *unrepented* of? A new sin may be *permitted*, as well

as a *new affliction* sent to bring an old sin to remembrance.

Hast thou received any eminent *mercy*, protection, deliverance, which thou didst not *improve* in a due manner, nor were thankful for? Or hast thou been exercised with any *affliction*, without labouring for the appointed end of it? Or hast thou been wanting to the *opportunities* of glorifying God in thy generation, which in his good providence he had graciously afforded unto thee? Or hast thou *conformed* thyself unto the world and the men of it, through the abounding of temptations in the days wherein thou livest?

If thou findest this to have been thy *state*, *awake*, call upon God; thou art fast asleep in a storm of *anger* round about thee.

(6) When thy *lust* hath already withstood particular dealings from God against it. This condition is described, *Isa. lvii. 17. for the iniquity of his covetousness I was wrath, and smote him, I bid me and was wrath, and he went on forwardly in the way of his heart.* God had dealt with them about their prevailing lust, and that several ways, by affliction and *desertion*. But they held out against all: this is a sad condition which nothing but *meer sovereign grace* (as God expresses it in the next verse) can relieve a man in, and which no man ought to *promise* himself, or bear himself upon. God oftentimes in his providential dispensations meets with a man, and speaks particularly to the *evil* of his heart, as he did to *Joseph's* brethren in their selling of him into *Egypt*. This makes the man reflect on his *sin*, and judge himself in particular for it. God makes it to be the voice of the *danger*, *affliction*, *trouble*, *sickness*, that he is in, or under. Sometimes in *reading* of the word, God makes a man *stay* on something that cuts him to the heart, and shakes him as to his *present* condition.

tion. More frequently in the *bearing* of the *word* preached (his great ordinance for conviction, conversion and edification) doth he meet with men. God often *beats* men by the *sword* of his *word* in that ordinance; strikes directly on their *bosom* beloved *lust*; startles the sinner, makes him engage into the *mortification* and relinquishment of the evil of his heart. Now if his *lust* have taken such hold on him, as to enforce him to *break* these *bonds* of the Lord, and to cast *these cords* from him; if it *overcomes* these convictions, and gets again into its *old posture*; if it can cure the wounds it so receives, that soul is in a sad condition.

Unspeakable are the *evils* which attend such a frame of heart: every particular *warning* to a man in such an estate, is an inestimable mercy; how then doth he *despise* God in them, who holds out against them; and what infinite patience is this in God, that he doth not cast off such an one, and *swear* in his wrath, that he shall never enter into his rest!

These and many other evidences are *there* of a lust that is dangerous, if not *mortal*. As our Saviour said of the *evil spirit*, this *kind goes not out but by fasting and prayer*: so say I of lusts of this *kind*; an ordinary course of *mortification* will not do it, extraordinary ways must be fixed on.

This is the *first particular* direction; consider whether the lust or sin you are contending with, hath any of these *dangerous symptoms* attending of it.

Before I proceed, I must give *one caution* by the way, lest any be deceived by what hath been spoken. Whereas I say, the *things* and *evils* abovementioned may *befal* true *believers*, let not any that *finds* the same things in *himself*, *thence* or from *thence* conclude that he is a *true believer*. These are the *evils* that *believers* may fall into,
and

and be ensnared with, not the *things* that constitute a believer. A man may as well conclude that he is a *believer*, because he is an *adulterer*; because *David* that was so, fell into *adultery*; as conclude it from the *signs* foregoing, which are the *evils* of sin and Satan in the hearts of *believers*. The *seventh* of the *Romans* contains the description of a regenerate man. He that shall consider what is spoken of his *dark side*, of his *unregenerate part*, of the indwelling power and violence of sin remaining in him, and because he finds the *like* in himself, conclude that he is a regenerate man, will be deceived in his reckoning. It is all one as if you should *argue*, a *wise* man may be *sick* and *wounded*, yea do some things *foolishly*, therefore every one who is *sick* and *wounded* and does things *foolishly*, is a *wise* man. Or as if a *filly* deformed creature hearing one speaking of a *beautiful person*, should say that he had a *mark* or *affair* that much *disfigured* him, should conclude that because he hath himself *scars*, and *moles*, and *warts*, that he also is *beautiful*. If you will have evidences of your being *believers*, it must be from those things that constitute men believers. He that hath these things in himself, may safely conclude, *If I am a believer, I am a most miserable one*. But that any man is so, he must look for other evidences, if he will have peace.

C H A P. X.

The second particular direction. Get a clear sense of

(1) *The guilt of the sin perplexing. Considerations for help therein proposed.* (2) *The danger manifold: 1. Hardening. 2. Temporal correction. 3. Loss of peace and strength. 4. Eternal destruction. Rules for the management of this consideration.* (3) *The evil of it: 1. In grieving the Spirit. 2. Wounding the new creature.*

TH E Second direction is this,

Get a clear and abiding sense upon thy mind and conscience of the (1) Guilt, (2) Danger, (3) Evil of that sin wherewith thou art perplexed.

(1) *Of the guilt of it. It is one of the deceits of a prevailing lust, to extenuate its own guilt. Is it not a little one? When I go and bow myself in the house of Rimmon, God be merciful to me in this thing. Though this be bad, yet it is not so bad as such and such an evil, others of the people of God have had such a frame; yea what dreadful actual sins have some of them fallen into! Innumerable ways there are whereby sin diverts the mind from a right and due apprehension of its guilt. Its noisome exhalations darken the mind, that it cannot make a right judgment of things; perplexing reasonings, extenuating promises, tumultuating desires, treacherous purposes of relinquishment, hopes of mercy; all have a share in disturbing the mind, in its consideration of the guilt of a prevailing lust. The prophet tells us, that lust will do thus wholly, when it comes to the height: Hos. iv. 11. Whoredom and wine and new wine take away the heart: the heart, (i. e.) the understanding, as it is often used in the Scripture. And as they*

they accomplish this work to the height in *unregenerate persons*, so in part in *regenerate* also. Solomon tells you of him who was *enticed* by the *lewd woman*, that he was among the *simple ones*, he was a *young man void of understanding*, Prov. vii. 7. And wherein did his folly appear? Why, says he, in the 23d verse, *he knew not that it was for his life*; he considered not the guilt of the evil that he was involved in. And the Lord rendering a reason why his dealings with Ephraim took no better effect, gives this account; *Ephraim is like a silly dove without heart*, Hos. vii. 11. had no understanding of his own miserable condition. Had it been possible that David should have lain so long in the guilt of that abominable sin, but that he had *innumerable* corrupt reasonings, hindering him from taking a clear view of its ugliness and guilt in the glass of the law? This made the prophet that was sent for his awaking, in his dealings with him, to shut up all *subterfuges* and pretences, by his parable; that so he might fall fully under a sense of the guilt of it. This is the *proper* issue of lust in the heart, it darkens the mind that it shall not judge aright of its guilt; and many other ways it hath for its own extenuation, that I shall not now insist on. Let this then be the *first* care of him that would mortify sin, to fix a *right judgment* of its guilt in his mind. To which end take these considerations to thy assistance:

1. Though the power of sin be weakened by *inherent* grace in them that have it, that sin shall not have *dominion* over them, as it hath over others, yet the guilt of sin that doth yet abide and remain, is aggravated and heightened by it, Rom. vi. 1, 2. *What shall we say then? shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? God forbid, how shall we that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? How shall we that are dead; the emphasis is on the word*

we. How shall *we* do it, who (as he afterwards describes it) have received grace from Christ to the contrary? We (doubtless) are more evil than any, if we do it. I shall not insist on the special aggravations of the sins of *such* persons; how they sin against more *love, mercy, grace, assistance, relief, means and deliverances*, than others. But let this consideration abide in thy mind. There is inconceivably more evil and guilt in the *evil* of thy heart, that doth remain, than there would be in so much sin, if thou hadst no *grace* at all. Observe,

2. That as God *sees* abundance of *beauty* and excellency in the *desires* of the hearts of his servants, more than in any the most *glorious* works of other men, yea more than in most of their *own* outward performances, which have a greater mixture of sin than the desires and pantings of grace in the heart have: so God sees a *great deal* of evil in the *working* of lust in their hearts, yea and more than in the *open notorious acts* of wicked men, or in many *outward* sins whereinto the *saints* may fall; seeing against them there is *more opposition* made, and more humiliation generally follows them. Thus Christ, dealing with his decaying children, goes to the root with them; lays aside their *profession*, Rev. iii. 15. I know thee, thou art quite another thing than thou *professest*, and this makes thee abominable.

So then; let these things and the like considerations lead thee to a *clear sense* of the guilt of thy *indwelling lust*, that there may be no room in thy heart for *extenuating* or excusing thoughts, whereby sin *insensibly* will get *strength* and prevail.

(2) Consider the *danger* of it, which is manifold:

1. Of being *hardened by its deceitfulness*: this the apostle sorely charges on the *Hebrews*, Ch. iii.

v. 12,

v. 12, 13. *Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God: but exhort one another daily, while it is called to-day, lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. Take heed (saith he) use all means, consider your temptations, watch diligently, there is a treachery, a deceit in sin, that tends to the hardening of your hearts from the fear of God. The hardening here mentioned is to the utmost; utter obduration; sin tends to it, and every distemper and lust will make at least some progress towards it. Thou that wast tender, and didst use to melt under the word, under afflictions, wilt grow (as some have profanely spoken) Sermon-proof, and sickness-proof; thou that didst tremble at the presence of God, thoughts of death, and appearance before him, when thou hadst more assurance of his love than now thou hast, shalt have a stoutness upon thy spirit, not to be moved by these things. Thy soul and thy sin shall be spoken of, and spoken to, and thou shalt not be at all concerned; but shalt be able to pass over duties, praying, hearing, reading, and thy heart not in the least affected. Sin will grow a light thing to thee; thou wilt pass by it as a thing of nought; this it will grow to, and what will be the end of such a condition? Can a sadder thing befall thee? Is it not enough to make any heart to tremble, to think of being brought into that estate, wherein he should have slight thoughts of sin; slight thoughts of grace, of mercy, of the blood of Christ, of the law, Heaven and hell, come all in at the same season? Take heed, this is that thy lust is working towards; the hardening of the heart, searing of the conscience, blinding of the mind, stupifying of the affections, and deceiving of the whole soul.*

2. *The danger of some great temporal correction, which the Scripture calls vengeance, judgment, and punishment,*

punishment, Psal. lxxxix. 30, 31, 32, 33. Though God should not utterly *cast* thee off for this *abomination* that lies in thy heart, yet he will *visit* with the *rod*; though he pardon and forgive, he will take *vengeance* of thy *inventions*. O remember *David* and all his *troubles*; look on him *flying* into the *wilderness*, and consider the hand of God upon him. Is it nothing to thee, that God should *kill* thy *child* in *anger*, *ruin* thy *estate* in *anger*, *break* thy *bones* in *anger*, suffer thee to be a scandal and reproach in *anger*, *kill* thee, *destroy* thee, make thee lie down in *darkness* in *anger*? Is it nothing that he should *punish*, *ruin*, and *undo* others for thy sake? Let me not be mistaken, I do not mean, that God doth send all these things always on *his* in *anger*; God forbid. But this I say, that when he doth so deal with thee, and thy conscience bears witness with him, what thy provocations have been, thou wilt find his dealings full of *bitterness* to thy soul. If thou *fearst* not these things, I *fear* thou art under *hardness*.

3. *Loss of peace* and strength all a man's days. To have *peace* with God, to have strength to walk before God, is the *sum* of the great *promises* of the *covenant* of grace. In *these* things is the *life* of our souls. Without them in some *comfortable* measure, to live, is to die. What good will our lives do us, if we see not the *face* of God sometimes in *peace*? If we have not some strength to walk with him? Now both these will an *unmortified* *lust* certainly deprive the *souls* of men of. This *case* is so evident in *David*, as that nothing can be more clear. How often doth he complain that his *bones* were broken, his *soul* disquieted, his wounds grievous on this account? Take other instances, *Isa. lviii. 18. For the iniquity of his covetousness I was wrath, and hid myself.* What *peace* I pray is there to a soul while God *hides* himself? Or *strength* whilst

whilst he smites? Hof. v. 15. *I will go and return to my place, until they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face. I will leave them, hide my face, and what will become of their peace and strength? If ever then thou hast enjoyed peace with God, if ever his terrors have made thee afraid, if ever thou hast had strength to walk with him, or ever hast mourned in thy prayer, and been troubled because of thy weakness, think of this danger that hangs over thy head. It is perhaps but a little while and thou shalt see the face of God in peace no more: perhaps by to-morrow thou shalt not be able to pray, read, hear, or perform any duties with the least cheerfulness, life or vigour; and possibly thou mayst never see a quiet hour whilst thou livest; that thou mayst carry about thee broken bones full of pain and terror all the days of thy life; yea perhaps God will shoot his arrows at thee, and fill thee with anguish and disquietness, with fears and perplexities, make thee a terror and an astonishment to thyself and others, shew thee hell and wrath every moment; frighten and scare thee with sad apprehensions of his hatred, so that thy sore shall run in the night season, and thy soul shall refuse comfort; so that thou shalt wish death rather than life, yea thy soul may choose strangling. Consider this a little, though God should not utterly destroy thee, yet he might cast thee into this condition, wherein thou shalt have quick and living apprehensions of thy destruction. Wont thy heart to thoughts hereof: let it know what is like to be the issue of its state, leave not this consideration until thou hast made thy soul to tremble within thee.*

4. There is the danger of *eternal destruction*. For the due management of this consideration, observe,

I. That there is such a *connection* between a continuance in sin and *eternal destruction*, that though
God

God does resolve to deliver some from a *continuance* in sin, that they may not be destroyed, yet he will deliver none from destruction that *continue* in sin. So that whilst any one lies under an abiding power of sin, the threats of destruction and everlasting *separation* from God are to be held out to him: so *Heb. iii. 12.* to which add *Heb. x. 38.* This is the rule of God's proceeding: if any man *depart* from him, *draw back* through unbelief, God's soul hath no pleasure in him; that is, his indignation shall *pursue* him to destruction; so evidently, *Gal. vi. 8.*

II. That he who is *so intangled* (as above described) under the power of any corruption, can have at that present no clear prevailing evidence of his *interest* in the covenant, by the efficacy whereof he may be delivered from fear of destruction. So that *destruction from the Lord* may justly be a terror to him; and he may, he ought to look upon it, as that which will be the end of his *course* and ways. *There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, Rom. viii. 1.* True! but who shall have the comfort of this assertion? Who may *assume* it to himself? *They that walk after the Spirit, and not after the flesh.* But you will say, is not this to persuade men to *unbelief*? I answer, no; there is a *twofold judgment* that a man may make of himself; 1. Of his *person*, and 2. Of his *ways*. It is the judgment of his *ways*, not his *person* that I speak of; let a man get the best *evidence* for his *person* that he can, yet to judge that an evil *way* will end in destruction, is his duty; not to do it, is *atheism*. I do not say, that in such a condition a man ought to throw away the evidences of his personal interest in Christ; but I say, he *cannot keep* them. There is a *twofold condemnation of a man's self*:

First,

First, in respect of *desert*, when the soul concludes, that it deserves to be cast out of the presence of God; and this is so far from a business of *unbelief*, that it is an effect of faith.

Secondly, With respect to the *issue* and event; when the soul concludes it shall be damned. I do not say this is the *duty* of any one, nor do I call them to it. But this I say, that the end of the way wherein a man is, ought by him to be concluded to be *death*, that he may be provoked to fly from it; and this is another *consideration*, that ought to dwell upon such a soul, if it desire to be freed from the intanglement of its lusts.

(3) Consider the *evils* of it. I mean its *present evils*. Danger respects what is to come; evil what is *present*: some of the many *evils* that attend an *unmortified* lust, may be mentioned.

1. It grieves the holy and blessed Spirit, which is given to believers to dwell in them and abide with them. So the apostle, (*Ephes. iv. 25, 26, 27, 28, 29.*) dehorting them from many lusts and sins, gives this as the great motive of it, *ver. 30. Grieve not the holy Spirit, whereby you are sealed to the day of redemption. Grieve not that Spirit of God* (saith he) *whereby you receive so many and so great benefits; of which he instances in one signal and comprehensive one, sealing to the day of redemption. He is grieved by it, as a tender and loving friend is grieved at the unkindness of his friend, of whom he hath well deserved; so is it with this tender and loving Spirit, who hath chosen our hearts for a habitation to dwell in, and there to do for us all that our souls desire. He is grieved by our harbouring his enemies, and those whom he is to destroy in our hearts with him. He doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve us, Lam. iii. 33. and shall we daily grieve him? Thus is he said sometimes to be vexed, sometimes grieved at his heart, to express the*
H greatest

greatest sense of our *provocation*. Now if there be any thing of *gracious ingenuity* left in the soul, if it be not utterly hardened by the deceitfulness of sin, this consideration will *certainly* affect it. Consider who and what *thou art*, *who* the Spirit is that is *grieved*, *what* he hath *done* for thee, *what* he comes to thy soul *about*, *what* he hath already *done in thee*: and be *ashamed*. Among those who walk with God, there is no greater motive and *incentive* unto universal holiness, and the preserving of their hearts and spirits in all purity and cleanness, than this, that the blessed Spirit who hath undertaken to *dwell* in them as temples of God, and to preserve them meet for him who so *dwells* in them, is continually considering what they give entertainment in their hearts unto; and rejoiceth when his *temple* is kept *undefiled*; that was an high aggravation of the sin of *Zimri*, that he brought his *adulteresses* into the congregation in the sight of *Moses*; and the rest, who were weeping for the sins of the people, *Numb. xxv. 6.* and is it not a high aggravation of the countenancing a lust, or suffering it to abide in the heart, when it is (as it must be, if we are believers) entertained under the *peculiar eye* and view of the Holy Ghost; taking care to preserve his tabernacle pure and holy?

2. The Lord Jesus is *wounded* afresh by it; his *new creature* in the heart is wounded. His love is foiled, his *adversary* gratified. As a total *relinquishment* of him by the deceitfulness of sin, is the crucifying him afresh, and the *putting of him to open shame*, so every *harbouring* of sin that he came to destroy, wounds and grieves him.

3. It will *take away* a man's *usefulness* in his generation. His works, his *endeavours*, his *labours* seldom receive blessing from God. If he be a *preacher*, God commonly *blows* upon his *ministry*,

that he shall labour in the fire, and not be honoured with any success, or doing any work for God; and the like may be spoken of other conditions. The world is at this day full of poor *withering* professors; how few are there that walk in any beauty, or glory; how *barren*, how useless are they for the most part! Amongst the many *reasons* that may be assigned of this sad estate, it may justly be feared, that this is none of the least effectual; many men harbour spirit-devouring lusts in their bosoms, that lie as worms at the root of their obedience, and *corrode* and weaken it day by day. All graces, all the ways and means whereby any graces may be exercised and improved, are prejudiced by this means; and as to any success, God blasts such mens undertakings.

This then is my *second direction*, and it regards the opposition that is to be made to *lust*, in respect of its habitual *residence* in the soul; keep alive upon thy heart these or the *like considerations*, of its *guilt*, *danger* and *evil*; be much in the *meditation* of these things; cause thy heart to dwell and abide upon them. *Engage* thy thoughts into these considerations; let them not *go off*, nor wander from them, until they begin to have a powerful influence upon thy *soul*; until they make it to *tremble*.

C H A P. XI.

The third direction proposed. Load the conscience with the guilt of the perplexing distemper. The ways and means whereby that may be done. The fourth direction. Vehement desire for deliverance. The fifth. Some distempers rooted deeply in mens natural tempers. Considerations of such distempers: Ways of dealing with them. The sixth direction. Occasions and advantages of sin to be prevented. The seventh direction. The first workings of sin vigorously to be opposed.

THIS is my third direction:

Load thy conscience with the guilt of it. Not only consider, that it hath a guilt, but load thy conscience with the guilt of its actual eruptions and disturbances.

For the right improvement of this rule, I shall give some particular directions.

First, Take God's method in it; and begin with generals, and so descend to particulars.

(1) Charge thy conscience with that guilt which appears in it, from the rectitude and holiness of the law. Bring the holy law of God into thy conscience; lay thy corruption to it; pray that thou mayst be affected with it. Consider the holiness, spirituality, fiery severity, inwardness, absoluteness of the law; and see how thou canst stand before it. Be much (I say) in affecting thy conscience with the terror of the Lord in the law, and how righteous it is that every one of thy transgressions should receive a recompence of reward. Perhaps thy conscience will invent shifts and evasions to keep off the power of this consideration; as, that the condemning power of the law doth not belong to thee, thou

thou art set free from it, and the like; and so though thou be not *conformable* to it, yet thou needest not to be so much troubled at it. But,

1. Tell thy *conscience*, that it cannot manage any evidence to the purpose, that thou art free from the *condemning* power of sin, whilst thy *unmortified* lust lies in thy heart; so that perhaps the *law* may make good its plea against thee for a *full dominion*, and then thou art a lost creature. Wherefore it is best to ponder to the utmost, what it hath to say.

Assuredly he that pleads in the most secret reserve of his heart, that he is freed from the *condemning power of the law*, thereby secretly to countenance himself in giving the least *allowance* unto any sin or lust, is not able on Gospel grounds to manage any evidence unto any tolerable spiritual security, that indeed he is in a due manner freed from what he so pretends himself to be delivered.

2. Whatever be the *issue*, yet the *law* hath commission from God to seize upon transgressors wherever it finds them, and so bring them before his throne, where they are to plead for themselves; this is thy present case: the law hath found thee out, and before God it will bring thee: if thou canst plead a pardon, well and good; if not, the law will do its work.

3. However, this is the *proper work* of the *law*, to discover sin in the guilt of it, to awake and humble the soul for it, to be a glass to represent sin in its colours; and if thou deniest to deal with it on this account, it is not through *faith*, but through the *hardness* of thy *heart* and the deceitfulness of sin.

This is a door that too many *professors* have gone out at, unto open *apostacy*; such a deliverance from the law they have pretended, as that they

would consult its guidance and direction no more; they would measure their sin by it no more; by little and little this principle hath insensibly from the *notion* of it proceeded to influence their *practical* understandings; and having taken possession there, hath turned the will and affections loose to all manner of abominations.

By such ways (I say then) as these, persuade thy conscience to hearken *diligently* to what the law speaks in the name of the Lord unto thee, about thy lust and corruption. Oh! if thy ears be open, it will speak with a *voice* that shall make thee *tremble*, that shall cast thee to the ground, and fill thee with *astonishment*. If ever thou wilt *mortify* thy *corruptions*, thou must tie up thy *conscience* to the *law*, shut it from all *shifts* and exceptions until it owns its *guilt*, with a clear and thorough apprehension: so that thence, (as *David* speaks) *thy iniquity may ever be before thee*.

(2) Bring thy *lust* to the *Gospel*, not for relief, but for farther *conviction* of its guilt; look on him whom thou hast pierced, and be in bitterness. Say to thy soul: what have I done? What *love*, what *mercy*, what *blood*, what *grace* have I *despised* and trampled on? Is this the return I make to the Father for his *love*, to the Son for his *blood*, to the Holy Ghost for his *grace*? Do I thus requite the Lord? Have I defiled the *heart* that Christ died to wash; that the blessed Spirit hath chosen to dwell in? And can I keep myself out of the dust? What can I say to the dear Lord Jesus? How shall I hold up my head with any boldness before him? Do I account *communion* with him of so little value, that for this *vile lust's* sake I have scarce left him any room in my heart? How shall I escape, if I neglect so great salvation? In the mean time, what shall I say to the Lord? *Love, mercy, grace, goodness, peace, joy, consolation*, I have despised them all,

all, and esteemed them as a thing of *naught*, that I might *harbour* a lust in my heart.

Have I obtained a view of God's fatherly countenance, that I might behold his *face*, and provoke him to his *face*? Was my soul washed, that *room* might be made for new defilements? Shall I endeavour to disappoint the end of the death of *Christ*? Shall I daily grieve that Spirit whereby I am sealed to the day of redemption? Entertain thy conscience daily with this *treaty*. See if it can stand before this *aggravation* of its guilt. If this make it not sink in some *measure*, and melt, I fear thy case is dangerous.

Secondly, Descend to *particulars*. As under the *general* head of the Gospel, all the benefits of it are to be considered, as *redemption*, *justification* and the like; so in *particular*, consider the management of the love of them toward thine own soul, for the aggravation of the guilt of thy corruption. As,

1. Consider the *infinite* patience and *forbearance* of God towards thee in particular: consider what advantages he might have taken against thee, to have made thee a *shame* and a *reproach* in this world, and an *object* of wrath for ever: how thou hast dealt treacherously and falsely with him from time to time, *flattered* him with thy lips, but broken all promises and *engagements*; and that by the means of that sin thou art now in pursuit of; and yet he hath spared thee from time to time, although thou seemest *boldly* to have put it to the trial how long he could hold out: and wilt thou yet sin against him? Wilt thou yet weary him, and make him to serve with thy corruptions?

Hast thou not often been ready to conclude thyself, that it was utterly impossible that he should bear any *longer* with thee; that he would cast thee off, and be gracious no more; that all his *forbearance*

ance was exhausted; and *hell* and wrath was even ready prepared for thee; and yet, above all thy expectation, he hath returned with visitations of love; and wilt thou yet abide in the provocation of the eyes of his glory?

2. How often hast thou been at the *door* of being hardened by the deceitfulness of sin; and by the *infinite rich grace* of God hast been recovered to *communion* with him again?

Hast thou not found grace *decaying*; delight in duties, ordinances, prayer and meditation, *vanishing*; inclinations to loose careless walking, thriving; and they who before were entangled, almost beyond recovery? Hast thou not found thyself engaged in such ways, societies, companies, and that with delight, as God abhors? and wilt thou venture any more to the brink of hardness?

3. All God's gracious dealings with thee in providential *dispensations*, deliverances, afflictions, mercies, enjoyments, all ought here to take place. By these I say, and the like *means*, load thy *conscience*, and leave it not until it be *thoroughly* affected with the *guilt* of thy indwelling corruption: until it is sensible of its wound, and lie in the dust before the Lord. Unless this be done to the purpose, all other endeavours are to no purpose. Whilst the *conscience* hath any means to alleviate the *guilt* of sin, the soul will never vigorously attempt its mortification.

Fourthly, Being thus *affected* with thy sin, in the *next place*, get a *constant longing*, *breathing after deliverance from the power of it*. Suffer not thy heart one moment to be *contented* with thy present frame and condition. *Longing* desires after any thing, in things *natural* and *civil*, are of no *value* nor consideration, any farther, but as they incite and *stir up* the *person* in whom they are, to a diligent *use* of means for the bringing about the thing aimed

aimed at. In spiritual things it is otherwise. Longing, breathing and panting after deliverance, is a *grace* in itself, that hath a *mighty* power to *conform* the soul into the *likeness* of the thing longed after. Hence the *apostle* describing the *repentance* and *godly* sorrow of the *Corinthians*, reckons this as one *eminent grace* that was then set on work; *vehement desire*, 2 Cor. vii. 11. And in this case of indwelling sin, and the *power* of it, what frame doth he express *himself to be in*? Rom. vii. 24. His *heart* breaks out with longings into a most *passionate expression* of desire of deliverance. Now if this be the *frame* of saints, upon the *general consideration* of indwelling sin, how is it to be *heightened* and increased, when *thereunto* is added the *perplexing* rage and power of any *particular lust* and corruption? Assure thyself, unless thou *longest* for deliverance thou shalt not have it.

This will make the heart *watchful* for all opportunities of advantage against its enemy; and ready to close with *any assistance* that are afforded for its destruction; strong desires are the very life of that *praying always* which is enjoined us in all conditions, and in none is more necessary than in this; they set faith and hope on work, and are the soul's *moving* after the Lord.

Get thy heart into a *panting* and *breathing* frame, long, *figh*, cry out; you know the example of *David*, I shall not need to insist on it.

The *Fifth Direction* is,

5thly, Consider whether the *distemper* with which thou art perplexed, be not rooted in thy *nature*, and cherished, fomented and *heightened* from thy *constitution*. A proneness to some sins may doubtless lie in the natural temper and disposition of men. In this case consider:

1. This is not in the least an *extenuation* of the *guilt* of thy sin.

Some

77 The MORTIFICATION of

Some with an open profaneness will ascribe gross enormities to their temper and disposition. And whether others may not relieve themselves from the pressing guilt of their distempers by the same consideration, I know not. It is from the fall, from the original depravation of our natures, that the fomes and nourishment of any sin abides in our natural temper. David reckons his being *shapen in iniquity*, and *conception in sin*, Psal. li. 5. as an aggravation of his following sin, not a lessening or extenuation of it. That thou art peculiarly inclined unto any sinful distemper, is but a peculiar breaking out of original lust in thy nature, which should peculiarly abase and humble thee.

2. That thou hast to fix upon on this account, in reference to thy walking with God, is, that so great an advantage is given to sin, as also to Satan, by this thy temper and disposition, that without extraordinary watchfulness, care and diligence, they will assuredly prevail against thy soul. Thousands have been on this account hurried headlong to hell, who otherwise (at least) might have gone at a more gentle, less provoking, less mischievous rate.

3. For the mortification of any distemper, so rooted in the nature of a man, unto all other ways and means already named or farther to be insisted on, there is one expedient peculiarly suited. This is that of the apostle, 1 Cor. ix. 27. *I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection.* The bringing of the very body into subjection, is an ordinance of God, tending to the mortification of sin. This gives check unto the natural root of the distemper, and withers it by taking away its fatness of soil. Perhaps because the Papists (men ignorant of the righteousness of Christ, the work of his spirit, and whole business in hand) have laid the whole weight and stress of mortification in voluntary services and penances;

penances; leading to the *subjection* of the body, knowing indeed the true nature neither of *sin* nor *mortification*, it may on the other side be a temptation to some, to neglect some means of *humiliation*, which by God himself are owned and appointed. The *bringing* of the *body* into *subjection* in the *case* insisted on, by cutting short the *natural appetite*, by *fasting*, *watching*, and the like, is doubtless *acceptable* to God, so it be done with the ensuing *limitations*.

(1) That the outward *weakening* and impairing of the body, be not looked upon as a thing good in itself, or that any *mortification* doth *consist* therein, (which were again to bring us under *carnal ordinances*) but only as a means for the end proposed; the *weakening* of any distemper in its natural root and seat. A man may have *leanness* of body and soul together.

(2) That the *means* whereby this is done, namely, by *fasting* and *watching*, and the like, be not looked on as things that in themselves, and by virtue of their own power, can produce true *mortification* of any sin; for if they would, sin might be mortified without any help of the Spirit, in any *unregenerate* person in the world. They are to be looked on only as ways whereby the *Spirit* may, and sometimes doth put forth *strength* for the accomplishing of his own *work*, especially in the case mentioned. Want of a right understanding and due improvement of these and the like considerations, hath raised a *mortification* among the Papists that may be better applied to horses and other beasts of the field, than to *believers*.

This is the *sum* of what hath been spoken; when the *distemper* complained of, seems to be rooted in natural temper and *constitution*, in applying our souls to a participation of the *blood* and *spirit* of Christ, an endeavour is to be used, to give *check* in

in the way of God, to the natural root of that distemper.

Sixthly, Consider what occasions, what advantages thy distemper hath taken to exert and put forth itself, and watch against them all. This is one part of that duty which our blessed Saviour recommends to his disciples under the name of watching, Mark xiii. 37. *I say unto you all, watch; which in Luke, xxi. 34. is, Take heed that your hearts be not overcharged: watch against all eruptions of thy corruptions.* I mean that duty which David professed himself to be exercised unto: *I have* (saith he) *kept myself from mine iniquity.* He watched all the ways and workings of his iniquity to prevent them, to rise up against them. This is that which we are called unto under the name of considering our ways: consider what ways, what companies, what opportunities, what studies, what businesses, what conditions, have at any time given, or do usually give advantages to thy distempers, and set thyself heedfully against them all. Men will do this with respect unto their bodily infirmities and distempers; the seasons, the diet, the air, that have proved offensive shall be avoided. Are the things of the soul of less importance? Know that he that dares to dally with occasions of sin, will dare to sin. He that will venture upon temptations unto wickedness, will venture upon wickedness. Hazael thought he should not be so wicked as the prophet told him he would be; to convince him, the prophet tells him no more, but thou shalt be king of Syria. If he will venture on temptations unto cruelty, he will be cruel. Tell a man he shall commit such and such sins, he will startle at it: if you can convince him, that he will venture on such occasions and temptations of them, he will have little ground left for his confidence. Particular directions belonging to this head are many,

not

not now to be insisted on. But because this head is of no less importance than the whole doctrine here handled, I have at large, in another treatise, about *entering into temptations*, treated of it.

Seventhly, Rise mightily against the *first* *actings* of thy distemper, its first conceptions; suffer it not to get the least ground. Do not say, thus far it shall go, and no farther. If it have *allowance* for *one* step, it will take *another*. It is impossible to fix bounds to sin. It is like water in a channel; if it once break out, it will have its *course*. Its not *acting*, is easier to be compassed than its bounding. Therefore doth *James* give that *gradation* and process of *lust*, Chap. i. 14, 15. that we may stop at the entrance. Dost thou find thy *corruption* to begin to entangle thy thoughts; rise up with all thy strength against it, with no less indignation than if it had fully accomplished what it aims at. Consider what an *unclean* thought would have; it would have thee *roll* thyself in folly and filth. Ask *envy* what it would have; *murder* and destruction is at the end of it. Set thyself against it with no less *wigour*, than if it had utterly *debased* thee to wickedness. Without this course thou wilt not prevail. As sin gets *ground* in the affections to *delight* in it, it gets also upon the understanding to *slight* it.

C H A P. XII.

The eighth direction. Thoughtfulness of the excellency of the majesty of God. Our unacquaintedness with him, proposed and considered.

EIGHTHLY, use and exercise thyself to such meditations as may serve to fill thee at all times with *self-abasement* and thoughts of thine own *vileness*: As,

1. Be much in thoughtfulness of the *excellency* of the majesty of God, and thine *infinite inconceivable distance* from him; many thoughts of it cannot but fill thee with a sense of thine own *vileness*, which strikes deep at the *root* of any indwelling sin. When *Job* comes to a *clear* discovery of the greatness and *excellency* of God, he is filled with *self-aborrancy*, and is pressed to humiliation, *Job* xlii. 5, 6. And in what *state* doth the prophet *Habakkuk* affirm himself to be cast, upon the apprehension of the *majesty* of God? *Chap.* iii. 16. *With God* (says *Job*) *is terrible majesty*, *Job.* xxxvii. 22. Hence were the thoughts of them of old, that when they had seen *God* they should die. The Scripture abounds in this *self-abasing consideration*, comparing the men of the earth to *grasshoppers*, to *vanity*, the *dust* of the *balance* in respect of God, *Isa.* xl. 13, 14, 15. Be much in thoughts of this *nature*, to abase the pride of thy heart, and to keep thy soul *humble* within thee. There is nothing will render thee in a greater *indisposition* to be imposed on by the deceits of sin, than such a frame of heart. Think *greatly* of the *greatness* of God.

2. Think much of thine *unacquaintedness* with him; though thou knowest enough to keep thee
long

low and humble, yet how little a portion is it that thou knowest of him! The contemplation hereof cast that wise man into that apprehension of himself, which he expresses, *Prov. xxx. 2, 3, 4.* Surely I am more brutish than any man, and have not the understanding of a man. I neither learned wisdom, nor have the knowledge of the holy. Who hath ascended up into Heaven, or descended? Who hath gathered the wind in his fists? Who hath bound the waters in a garment? Who hath established the ends of the earth? What is his name, and what is his Son's name if thou canst tell? Labour with this also to take down the pride of thy heart. What dost thou know of God? How little a portion is it? How immense is he in his nature? Canst thou look without terror into the abyss of eternity? Thou canst not bear the rays of his glorious Being.

Because I look on this consideration of great use in our walking with God, so far as it may have (as it may have) a consistency with that filial boldness which is given us in Jesus Christ to draw nigh to the throne of grace, I shall farther insist upon it, to give an abiding impression of it to the souls of them who desire to walk humbly with God.

Consider then I say, to keep thy heart in continual awe of the majesty of God, that persons of the most high and eminent attainments, of the nearest and most familiar communion with God, do yet in this life know but a very little of him, and his glory. God reveals his name to Moses, the most glorious attributes that he hath manifested in the covenant of grace, *Exod. xxxiv. 5, 6.* yet all are but the back-parts of God. All that he knows by it, is but little, low, compared to the perfection of his glory.

Hence it is with peculiar reference to Moses, that it is said, *No man hath seen God at any time, Joh. i. 18.* Of him in comparison with Christ doth he

Speak, *verse* 17. and of him it is here said, *No man* (no not *Moses*, the most eminent among them) *hath seen God at any time*. We speak much of God, can talk of him, his *ways*, his *works*, his *counsels*, all the day long; the truth is, we know very *little of him*, our thoughts, our meditations, our expressions of him are *low*, many of them *unworthy* of his *glory*, none of them reaching his *perfections*.

You will say, that *Moses* was under the *law*, when God *wrapped up* himself in *darkness*, and his mind in *types* and *clouds* and dark institutions. Under the glorious shining of the *Gospel*, which hath brought *life* and *immortality* to *light*, God being *revealed* from his *own bosom*, we now *know* him much more clearly, and *as he is*: we see his *face* in *w*, and not his *back-parts* only as *Moses* did.

Ans. 1. I acknowledge a *vast*, and almost *unconceivable* difference between the *acquaintance* we now have with God, after his *speaking* to us by his *own Son*, and that which the generality of the *saints* had under the *law*: for although their *eyes* were as good, *sharp* and *clear* as ours, their *faith* and *spiritual understanding* not behind ours, the *object* as glorious unto them as unto us, yet our day is more clear than theirs was; the *clouds* are *blown away* and scattered, the *shadows* of the *night* are gone and fled away, the *sun* is *risen*, and the means of sight is made more eminent and clear than formerly. Yet,

2. That peculiar sight which *Moses* had of God, *Excd.* xxxiv. was a *Gospel-sight*, a sight of God as *gracious*, &c. and yet it is called but his *back-parts*, that is, but *low* and *mean*, in comparison of his *excellencies* and *perfections*

3. The apostle *exalting* to the *utmost* this glory of *Gospel* light above that of the *law*, manifesting
that

that now the *veil causing darkness* is taken away; so that with open or *uncovered face* we behold the *glory of the Lord*; tells us how: *as in a glass*, 2 Cor. iii. 18. *In a glass*. How is that? *Clearly, perfectly*? Alas no: he tells you *how* that is, 1 Cor. xiii. 12. *We see through a glass darkly*, saith he: it is not a *telescope*, that helps us to see things afar off, concerning which the apostle speaks; and yet what poor helps are they! How short do we come of the truth of things, notwithstanding their assistance! It is a *looking-glass* whereunto he alludes, (where are only obscure *species* and *images* of things, and not the things themselves) and a sight therein, that he compares our knowledge to: he tells you also that all that we do see δι' ὀφθαλμοῦ, *by or through this glass*, is in ἀνιγμῶτι, *in a riddle*, in *darkness* and *obscurity*; and speaking of himself (who surely was much more *clear sighted* than any now living) he tells us that he saw but ἐκ μέρους, *in part*; he saw but the *back-parts* of heavenly things, v. 12. and compares all the *knowledge* he had attained of God, to that he had of things when he was a *child*, 1 Cor. 13. it is a μέρος, *short of the* τὸ τέλειον: yea such as καταργηθήσεται, *it shall be destroyed or done away*. We know what *weak, feeble, uncertain notions* and apprehensions *children* have of *things* of any *abstruse* consideration; how when they *grow up* with any *improvements* of parts and abilities, those conceptions *vannish*, and they are *ashamed* of them. It is the *commendation* of a *child*, to love, honour, *believe* and obey his father; but for his *science* and notions, his father knows their *childishness* and folly. Notwithstanding all our confidence of high attainments, all our notions of God are but *childish* in respect of his infinite perfections. We *lisp* and *babble*, and say we know not what, for the most

part, in our most accurate (as we think) conceptions and notions of God. We may love, honour, believe and obey our Father, and therewith he accepts our childish thoughts, for they are but childish. We see but his *back-parts*, we know but little of him. Hence is that promise, wherewith we are so often supported and comforted in our distress; *we shall see him as he is; we shall see him face to face; know as we are known; comprehend that for which we are comprehended*, 1 Cor. xv. 12. 1 Joh. iii. 2. and positively, *Now we see him not*: all concluding that here we see but his *back-parts*, not as he is, but in a dark obscure representation, not in the perfection of his glory.

The Queen of Sheba had heard much of Solomon, and framed many great thoughts of his magnificence in her mind thereupon; but when she came and saw his glory, she was forced to confess, that *the one half of the truth had not been told her*. We may suppose that we have here attained great knowledge, clear and high thoughts of God; but alas! when he shall bring us into his presence, we shall cry out, we never knew him as he is: the thousandth part of his glory and perfection and blessedness, never entered into our hearts.

The apostle tells us; 1 John, iii. 2. *That we know not what we ourselves shall be*; what we shall find ourselves in the issue; much less will it enter into our hearts to conceive, what God is, and what we shall find him to be. Consider either *him* who is to be known, or the way whereby we know him, and this will farther appear.

First, We know so little of God, because it is God who is thus to be known; that is, he who hath described himself to us very much by this, *That we cannot know him*: what else doth he intend where he calls himself *invisible, incomprehensible*, and the like? That is, he whom we do not,

cannot

cannot know as he is, and our farther progress consists more in knowing what he *is not*, than what he is. Thus is he described to be *immortal, infinite*; that is, he is not as *we are, mortal, finite, and limited*. Hence is that glorious description of him, 1 Tim. vi. 16. *Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto, whom no man hath seen nor can see.* His light is such as no creature can approach unto: he is not seen, not because he cannot be seen, but because we cannot bear the sight of him. The light of God (*in whom there is no darkness*) forbids all access to him by any creature whatever: we who cannot behold the sun in its glory, are too weak to bear the beams of infinite brightness.

On this consideration (as was said) the wise man professeth himself *a very beast, and not to have the understanding of a man*, Prov. xxx. 2. that is, he knew nothing in comparison of God, so that he seemed to have lost all his understanding, when once he came to the consideration of him, his work and his ways. In this consideration let our souls descend to some particulars.

1. For the *Being* of God; we are so far from a knowledge of *it*, so as to be able to *instruct* one another therein, by words and *expressions* of it, as that to frame any *conceptions* in our mind, with such *species* and impressions of things as we receive the knowledge of all other things by, is to make an *idol* to ourselves, and so to worship a god of our own making, and not the God that made us. We may as well and as lawfully hew him out of wood, or stone, as form him a *being* in our minds suited to our apprehensions.

The utmost of the best of our *thoughts* of the being of God is, that we can have no *thoughts* of it. Our knowledge of a *being* is but low, when
it

it *mounts no higher* but only to know that we know it not.

2. There be *some* things of God, which he himself hath taught us to speak of, and to regulate our expressions of them; but when we have so done, we see not the things themselves, we know them not: to *believe* and *admire* is all that we attain to. We profess (as we are taught) that God is *infinite, omnipotent, eternal*; and we know what *disputes* and *notions* there are about omnipresence, immensity, infiniteness and eternity. We have (I say) *words* and *notions* about these things, but as to the things themselves, what do we know? What do we comprehend of them? Can the mind of man do any more but *swallow* itself up in an *infinite abyss*, which is as nothing; give itself up to what it cannot *conceive*, much less *express*? Is not our *understanding* *brutish* in the contemplation of such things? And is as if it were not; yea the perfection of our *understanding*, is, not to understand, and to rest there: they are but the *back-parts* of eternity and *infiniteness* that we have a *glimpse* of. What shall I say of the *Trinity*, or the subsistence of *distinct persons* in the same *individual essence*; a mystery by many denied, because by none understood; a mystery whose every letter is *mysterious*?

Who can declare the generation of the *Son*, the *procession* of the *Spirit*, or the *difference* of the one from the other? but I shall not farther instance in particulars. That infinite and inconceivable *distance* that is between *Him* and us, keeps us in the dark as to any *sight of his face*, or clear apprehension of his perfections.

We know him rather by what he *does*, than by what he is: by his *doing us good*, than by his *essential* goodness; and how little a portion of him (as *Job* speaks) is hereby discovered?

Secondly,

Secondly, We know little of God, because it is *faith* alone whereby here we know him ; I shall not now discourse about the remaining impressions on the hearts of all men by nature that there is a God, nor what they may rationally be taught concerning that God, from the *works* of his creation and *providence*, which they see and behold ; it is confessedly (and that upon the woeful experience of all ages) so weak, low, dark, confused, that none ever on that *account* glorified God as they ought, but notwithstanding all their *knowledge* of God, were indeed *without* God in the world.

The chief and (upon the matter) almost only *acquaintance* we have with God, and his *dispensations* of himself, is by *faith*. *He that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that seek him*, Heb. xi. 6. Our knowledge of him, and his rewarding (the bottom of our obedience or coming to him) is *believing*. *We walk by faith, and not by sight*, 2 Cor. v. 7. *διὰ πίστεως ὡς δι' ὁπτιῶν*; by *faith*, and so by *faith*, as not to have any express *idea*, *image*, or *species* of that which we believe : *faith* is all the argument we have of things not *seen*, Heb. xi. 1. I might here insist upon the nature of it, and from all its *concomitants* and *concernments* manifest, that we know but the *back-parts* of what we know by *faith* only. As to its rise, it is built purely upon the testimony of him whom we have not *seen* ; as the apostle speaks, *How can ye love him whom you have not seen ? That is, whom you know not but by faith that he is : faith receives all upon his testimony, whom it receives to be, only upon his own testimony. As to its nature it is an assent upon testimony, not an evidence upon demonstration ; and the object of it is (as was said before) above us. Hence our faith (as was formerly observed) is called a seeing darkly as in a glass : all that we know this way (and all that*

that we know of God we know this way) is but *low*, and dark, and obscure.

But you will say, all this is true, but yet it is only so to them that know not God (perhaps) as he is revealed in Jesus Christ; with them who do so, it is otherwise. It is true, *No man hath seen God at any time, but the only begotten Son, he hath revealed him*, John, i. 17, 18. and, *the Son of God is now come, and hath given us an understanding that we may know him that is true*, 1 John, v. 20.

The illumination of the glorious Gospel of Christ who is the *image of God shineth upon* believers, 2 Cor. iv. 4. *yea and God who commandeth light to shine out of darkness, shines into their hearts, to give them the knowledge of his glory in the face of his Son*, v. 6. So that though we were *darkness*, yet we are now *light in the Lord*, Eph. v. 8. And the apostle says, *We all, with open face, behold the glory of the Lord*, 2 Cor. iii. 18. and we are now so far from being in such darkness, or at such a distance from God, that our *communion and fellowship is with the Father and the Son*, 1 John, i. 3. The light of the Gospel whereby now God is revealed, is *glorious*; not a star, but the *Sun* in his beauty is risen upon us; and the *veil* is taken from *our faces*; so that though *unbelievers*, yea and perhaps some *weak* believers may be in some *darkness*, yet those of any *growth*, or considerable *attainments* have a clear sight and view of the *face of God* in Jesus Christ.

A. 1. The truth is, we all of us *know* enough of him to love him more than we do, to delight in him, and serve him, believe him, obey him, put our trust in him above all that we have hitherto attained.

Our darkness and weakness is no plea for our negligence and disobedience. Who is it that hath walked up to the knowledge that he hath had of
the

the *perfections*, excellencies, and *will* of God? God's end in *giving* us any knowledge of himself here, is that we may *glorify him as God*; that is, *love him, serve him, believe and obey him*, give him all the *honour and glory* that is due from poor *sinful creatures*, to a *sin-pardoning God*, and creator; we must all acknowledge, that we were never *thoroughly transformed into the image* of that knowledge which we have had. And had we used our *talents* well, we might have been trusted with *more*.

2. *Comparatively*, that knowledge which we have of God by the *Revelation* of Jesus Christ in the *Gospel*, is exceeding eminent and glorious. It is so in *comparison* of any *knowledge* of God that might otherwise be *attained*, or was delivered in the *law* under the Old Testament, which had but the *shadow* of good things, *not the express image* of them. This the apostle pursues at large, 2 Cor. iii. Christ hath now in these last days revealed the *Father from his own bosom*, declared his name, made known his mind, will and counsel, in a far more clear, eminent, distinct manner than he did formerly, whilst he kept his people under the *pedagogy* of the *law*: and this is that which for the *most part* is intended in the places beforementioned; the *clear, perspicuous delivery and declaration* of God, and his will in the Gospel is expressly exalted in comparison of any *other way* of revelation of himself.

3. The difference between *believers* and *unbelievers*, as to knowledge, is not so much in the matter of their knowledge, as in the manner of *knowing*. Unbelievers some of them may know more, and be able to say more of God, his *perfections* and his *will*, than many *believers*, but they know nothing as they ought: nothing in a right *manner*, nothing *spiritually* and *savingly*; nothing with

100. The MORTIFICATION of

with an *holy, heavenly light*. The excellency of a believer is not, that he hath a *large apprehension* of things, but that what he doth *apprehend* (which perhaps may be very little) he sees it in the *light* of the Spirit of God, in a *saving soul-transforming light*: and this is that which gives us *communion* with God, and not *prying thoughts*, or *curious raised notions*.

4. Jesus Christ by his *word* and *spirit*, reveals to the hearts of all his, God as a *Father*, as a God in *covenant*, as a *rewarder*, every way sufficiently to teach us to obey him here, and to lead us to his bosom, to lie down there in the fruition of him to eternity: but yet now,

5. Notwithstanding all this, it is but a *little portion* we know of him, we see but his *back-parts*. For,

(1) The intendment of all Gospel *revelation* is not to *unveil* God's *essential glory*, that we should see him as he is, but meerly to declare so much of him as he *knows sufficient* to be a foundation of our *faith, love, obedience*, and *coming* to him. That is, of the *faith* which here he expects from us: such services as become poor creatures in the midst of temptations; but when he calls us to *eternal admiration* and contemplation, without interruption, he will make a new manner of discovery of himself, and the whole *shape* of things, as it now lies before us, will depart as a shadow.

(2) We are *dull and slow of heart* to receive the things that are in the word revealed. God, by our infirmity and weakness, keeping us in continual dependance on him, for teachings and revelations of himself out of his word, never in this world bringing any soul to the utmost of what is from the word to be made out and discovered; so that although the way of revelation in the Gospel
be

be clear and evident, yet we know little of the things themselves that are revealed.

Let us then revive the use and intendment of this consideration; will not a due apprehension of this *unconceivable* greatness of God, and that infinite distance wherein we stand from him, fill the soul with an holy and awful fear of him; so as to keep it in a frame unsuited to the thriving or *flourishing* of any lust whatever? Let the soul be continually wonted to reverential thoughts of God's greatness and *omnipresence*, and it will be much upon its *watch*, as to any undue deportments; consider *him* with whom you have to do; even *our God is a consuming fire*; and in your greatest abashments at his *presence* and *eye*, know, that your very nature is too narrow to bear *apprehensions* suitable to his essential glory.

C H A P. XIII.

The ninth direction. When the heart is disquieted by sin, speak no peace to it, until God speak it. Peace without detestation of sin, unsound; so is peace measured out unto ourselves. How we may know when we measure our peace unto ourselves. Directions as to that enquiry. The vanity of speaking peace slightly. Also of doing it on one singular account, not universally.

IN case God disquiet the heart about the *guilt* of its *distempers* either in respect of its root and *inwardness*, or in respect of any eruptions of it, take heed thou *speakest not peace to thyself before*

K

God

God speaks it; but hearken what he says to thy soul: this is our next direction, without the observation whereof, the heart will be exceedingly exposed to the *deceitfulness* of sin.

This is a business of great importance. It is a sad thing for a man to deceive his own soul herein. All the warnings God gives us in tenderness to our souls, to try and examine ourselves, do tend to the preventing of this great evil of speaking *peace groundlessly to ourselves*, which is upon the issue to bless ourselves in an opposition to God. It is not my business to insist upon the danger of it, but to help believers to prevent it, and to let them know when they do so.

To manage this direction aright, observe,

(1) That as it is the great *prerogative* and *sovereignty* of God to give grace to whom he pleases, (*he hath mercy on whom he will, Rom. ix. 16.* and among all the *sons* of men, he *calls whom he will*, and sanctifies whom he *will*) so among those so *called* and *justified*, and whom he will save, he yet reserves this privilege to himself, to speak peace to whom he pleaseth, and in what degree he pleaseth, even amongst them on whom he hath bestowed *grace*. He is the God of *all consolation*, in an especial manner in his dealing with believers: that is, of the *good things* that he keeps locked up in his family, and gives out of it to all his children at his pleasure. This the Lord insists on, *Isaiah, lviii. 16, 17, 18.* It is the case under consideration that is there insisted on. When God says he will *heal* their breaches and disconsolations, he assumes this privilege to himself in an especial manner. *I create it, ver. 19.* Even in respect of these poor wounded creatures, *I create it*, and according to my sovereignty make it out as I please.

Hence as it is with the *collation of grace* in reference to them that are in the state of nature; God doth

doth it in great curiosity, and his proceedings therein, in taking and leaving, as to outward appearances, quite besides, and contrary oftentimes to all probable expectations; so is it in his *communication of peace* and joy in reference unto them that are in the state of grace; he gives them out oftentimes quite besides our expectation, as to any appearing grounds of his dispensations.

(2) As God creates it for whom he pleases, so it is the prerogative of Christ, to speak it home to the conscience: speaking to the church of *Laodicea*, who had healed her wounds *falsely*, and spoke peace to herself when she *ought* not, he takes to himself that title, *I am the Amen*; the faithful witness, Revel. iii. 14. He bears testimony concerning our condition as it is indeed; we may possibly mistake, and trouble ourselves in vain, or flatter ourselves upon false grounds, but he is the *Amen*, the faithful witness, and what he speaks of our state and condition, that it is indeed, *Isa. xi. 3*. He is said not to judge according to the sight of the eye, not according to any outward appearance, or any thing that may be subject to a mistake, as we are apt to do; but he shall judge and determine every cause as it is indeed.

Take these two previous observations, and I shall give some rules whereby men may know whether God speaks peace to them, or whether they speak peace to themselves only.

(1) Men certainly speak peace to themselves, when their so doing is not attended with the greatest *certification* imaginable of that *sin* in reference whereunto they do speak peace to themselves, and *abhorrency* of themselves for it. When men are wounded by sin, disquieted and perplexed, and knowing that there is no remedy for them, but only in the mercies of God through the blood of Christ, do therefore look to him, and to the promises of the

covenant in him, and thereupon quiet their *hearts* that it shall be well with them, and that God will be exalted that he may be gracious to them, and yet their souls are not wrought to the *greatest* detestation of the sin or sins upon the account whereof they are disquieted; this is to heal themselves, and not to be healed of God. This is but a *great* and *strong* wind, that the Lord is *nigh* unto, but the Lord is not in the wind. When men do truly look upon Christ whom they have *pierced* (without which there is no healing or peace) they will *mourn*, Zech. xiii. 10. they will *mourn* for him even upon this account, and detest the *sin* that pierced him. When we go to Christ for *healing*, faith eyes him *peculiarly* as one *pierced*. Faith takes several *views* of Christ according to the *occasions* of address to him, and *communion* with him that it hath. Sometimes it views his *holiness*, sometimes his *power*, sometimes his *love*, his *favour* with his Father. And when it goes for *healing* and *peace*, it looks especially on the *blood* of the covenant, on his sufferings; for by his *stripes* are we *healed*, and the *chastisement* of our *peace* was upon him, Isa. liii. 5. when we look for *healing*, his *stripes* are to be eyed; not in the outward story of them, which is the course of *Popish* devotionists, but in the *love*, *kindness*, *mystery* and design of the cross. And when we look for *peace*, his *chastisements* must be in our eye: now this I say, if it be *done* according to the *mind* of God, and in the *strength* of that *Spirit* which is poured out on believers, it will beget a detestation of that sin or sins, for which *healing* and *peace* is sought. So Ezek. xvi. 60, 61. nevertheless *I will remember my covenant with thee in the days of thy youth, and I will establish unto thee an everlasting covenant, and what then? Then thou shalt remember thy ways and be ashamed.* When God comes home to speak *peace* in a *sure* covenant
of

of it, it fills the soul with *shame* for all the ways whereby it hath been alienated from him. And one of the things that the apostle mentions as attending that *godly sorrow* which is accompanied with *repentance* unto salvation never to be repented of, is *revenge*, yea *what revenge?* 2 Cor. vii. 11. They reflected on their *miscarriages* with *indignation* and *revenge* for their *folly* in them. When *Job* comes up to a thorough *healing*, he cries, *Now I abhor myself*, Job xlii. 6. and until he did so, he had no *abiding peace*. He might perhaps have *made up himself* with that doctrine of *free grace* which was so excellently *preached* by *Elihu*; Chap. xxxiii. from *ver.* 14. unto the 29th, but he had then but *skinned* his wounds, he must come to *self-aborrancy*, if he come to healing. So was it with those in *Psal.* lxxviii. 33, 35. in their *great trouble and perplexity* for and upon the account of sin; I doubt not but upon the address they made to God in Christ (for that so they did, is evident from the titles they gave him, they call him their *Rock* and their *Redeemer*, two words every where pointing out the Lord Christ) they spake peace to themselves; but was it *sound* and *abiding*? No, it passed away as the *early dew*: God speaks not one word of peace to their souls. But why had they not peace? Why, because in their *address* to God they *flattered him*: but how doth that appear? *ver.* 37. *Their heart was not right with him, neither were they steadfast.* They had not a *detestation* nor *relinquishment* of that sin, in reference whereunto they *spake peace* to themselves: let a man make what *application* he will for *healing* and *peace*, let him do it to the true *Physician*, let him do it the *right way*, let him quiet his heart in the *promises* of the covenant; yet when peace is *spoken*, if it be not attended with the *detestation* and *aborrancy* of that sin which was the *wound*, and caused the *disquiet-*

ment, this is no peace of God's *creating*, but of our own *purchasing*. It is but a *skinning* over the *wound*, whilst the *core* lies at the bottom, which will *putrify* and *corrupt*, and corrode, until it break out again with *noisomeness*, vexation and danger. Let not poor souls that *walk* in such a path as this, (they are more *sensible* of the *trouble* of sin, than of the *pollution* or *uncleanness* that attends it; they *address* themselves for *mercy*, yea to the Lord in Christ they address themselves for *mercy*, but yet will keep the sweet morsel of their sin under their tongue) let them (I say) never think to have *true* and *solid* peace. For instance, thou findest thy heart running out after the world, and it disturbs thee in thy *communion* with God; the Spirit speaks expressly to thee, *He that loveth the world, the love of the Father is not in him*, 1 John ii. 15. This puts thee on dealing with God in Christ for the *healing* of thy soul, the *quieting* of thy conscience; but yet withal a thorough *detestation* of the *evil* itself abides not upon thee; yea perhaps that is liked well enough, but only in respect of the *consequences* of it; perhaps thou mayest be saved, yet *as through fire*; and God will have some work with thee before he hath done, but thou wilt have little peace in this life; thou wilt be *sick* and fainting all thy days, *Isaiab* lvii. 17. This is a deceit that lies at the *root* of the peace of many professors, and wastes it; they deal with all their strength about mercy and pardon; and seem to have great *communion* with God in their so doing: they lie before him, *bewail* their sins and follies, that any one would think (yea they think themselves) that surely they and their sins are now parted, and so receive in mercy that *satisfies* their hearts for a little season; but when a thorough search comes to be made; there hath been some secret *reserve* for the folly or follies treated about; at least there
hath

hath not been that thorough abhorrency of it which is necessary; and their whole *peace* is quickly discovered to be weak and rotten; scarce abiding any longer than the words of begging it are in their mouths.

(2) When men measure out *peace* to themselves upon the *conclusions* that their *convictions* and rational principles will carry them out unto; this is a false peace, and will not abide. I shall a little explain what I mean hereby. A man hath got a wound by sin, he hath a conviction of some sin upon his conscience, he hath not *walked* uprightly as becometh the Gospel; all is not well and right between God and his soul: he considers now what is to be done; light he hath, and knows what path he must take, and how his soul hath been formerly healed. Considering that the *promises* of God are the outward means of application for the *healing* of his sores, and quieting of his heart, he goes to them, *searches* them out, *finds* out some one or more of them, whose *literal* expressions are directly suited to his *condition*: says he to himself, God speaks in this promise, here I will take myself a plaister as long and broad as my *wound*, and so brings the word of the *promise* to his *condition*, and sets him down in peace. This is another *appearance* upon the *mount*, the Lord is near, John xvi. 8. but the Lord is not in it. It hath not been the work of the Spirit (who alone can convince us of *sin* and *righteousness* and *judgment*) but the mere actings of the intelligent rational soul. As there are three sorts of lives (we say) the *vegetative*, the *sensitive* and the *rational* or intelligent. Some *things* have only the *vegetative*; some the *sensitive* also, and that includes the former; some have the *rational*, which takes in and supposes both the other. Now he that hath the *rational*, he doth not only act suitably to that *principle*, but also to both

both the others, he grows and is sensible. It is so with men in the things of God; some are meer natural and rational men; some have a *superadded* conviction with *illumination*; and some are truly regenerate. Now he that hath the latter, hath also both the former; and therefore he acts sometimes upon the principles of the rational, sometimes upon the principles of the enlightened man. His true spiritual life is not the principle of all his motions; he acts not always in the strength thereof, neither are all his fruits from that root. In this case that I speak of, he acts meerly upon the principle of conviction and illumination, whereby his first naturals are heightened; but the Spirit breaths not at all upon all these waters. Take an instance: suppose the wound and disquiet of the soul to be upon the account of relapses, which whatever the evil or folly be, though for the matter of it, never so small, yet there are no wounds deeper than those that are given the soul on that account, nor disquietments greater. In the perturbation of his mind, he finds out that promise, *Isaiah* lv. 7. *The Lord will have mercy, and our God will abundantly pardon*; he will multiply or add to pardon; he will do it again and again; or that in *Hos.* xiv. 4. *I will heal their back-sliding, I will love them freely*; this the man considers, and thereupon concludes peace to himself; whether the Spirit of God make the application or no, whether that gives life and power to the letter or no, that he regards not. He doth not hearken whether God the Lord speak peace. He doth not wait upon God, who perhaps yet hides his face, and sees the poor creature stealing peace and running away with it, knowing that the time will come when he will deal with him again, and call him to a new reckoning; *Hos.* xi. 3. when he shall see that it is in vain to go one step where God doth not take him by the hand.

I see

I see here indeed sundry other *questions* upon this arising and interposing themselves: I cannot apply myself to them all: one I shall a little speak to.

It may be said then, *seeing* that this seems to be the path that the Holy Spirit leads us in, for the healing of our *wounds*, and quieting of our *hearts*, how shall we know when we go alone ourselves, and when the *Spirit* also doth accompany us?

Ans. 1. If any of you are out of the way upon this account, God will speedily let you know it; for besides that you have his promise, that *the meek he will guide in judgment, and teach them his way*, Psal. xxv. 9. he will not let you always err. He will (I say) not suffer your *nakedness* to be covered with *fig-leaves*, but take them *away*, and all the peace you have in them, and will not suffer you to *settle* on such *lees*; you shall quickly *know* your *wound* is not healed. That is, you shall speedily know whether or no it be thus with you by the *event*; the peace you thus get and obtain, will not abide. Whilst the mind is overpowered by its own convictions, there is no hold for disquietments to fix upon. Stay a little and all these reasonings will grow cold, and vanish before the face of the first temptation that arises. But,

2. This course is commonly taken without *waiting*; which is the grace, and that peculiar acting of *faith* which God *calls* for to be exercised in such a condition. I know God doth sometimes come in upon the soul instantly, in a *moment* as it were, wounding and healing it; as I am persuaded it was in the case of *David* when he cut off the *lap* of *Saul's* garment: but *ordinarily* in such a case God calls for *waiting* and *labouring*, attending as the eye of a servant Psal. cxxiii. 2. upon his master: says the prophet Psal. cxxx. 6. *Isaiab*, Ch. viii. 17. *I will wait upon the Lord, who hideth his face from Jacob.*
God

God will have his *children* lie a while at his door, when they have *run* from his house, and not instantly *rust* in upon him; unless he take them by the *hand*, and pluck them in, when they are so ashamed that they *dare* not come to him. Now *self-healers*, or men that speak peace to themselves, do commonly make *haste*, they will not tarry; they do not *hearken* what God speaks, *Isaiab* xxviii. 16. but on they will go to be healed.

3. Such a course, though it may quiet the *conscience* and the *mind*, the rational concluding part of the soul, yet it doth not *sweeten* the heart with rest and gracious contention. The answer it receives is much like that *Elisha* gave *Naaman*, *Go in peace*; *2 Kings* v. 19. it quieted his mind, but I much question whether it *sweetened* his heart, or gave him any *joy in believing*, other than the *natural* joy that was then *stirred* in him upon his healing. *Do not my words do good?* saith the Lord, *Mich.* ii. 7. When God speaks, there is not only *truth* in his words, that may answer the *conviction* of our understanding, but also they do good, they bring *that* which is *sweet* and *good* and *desirable* to the will and affections: by them the soul returns unto its rest, *Psal.* cxvi. 16.

4. Which is worst of all, it *amends* not the *life*, it heals not the *evil*, it cures not the *dissemper*: when God speaks peace, it guides and *keeps* the soul that it turn not again to folly, *Psal.* lxxxv. 8. When we speak it ourselves, the heart is not taken off the evil. Nay it is the readiest course in the world to bring a soul into a trade of back-sliding. If upon thy *plastering* thyself, thou findest thyself rather animated to the *battle* again, than utterly *weaned* from it, it is too *palpable* that thou hast been at *work* with thy own soul, but Jesus Christ and his Spirit were not there. Yea and oftentimes *nature* having done its work, will, ere a
few

few days are over, come for its reward; and having been *active* in the work of healing, will be ready to reason for a new wounding. In God's speaking peace there comes along so much *sweetness* and such a discovery of Luke xxii. 32. his *love*, as is a strong obligation on the soul no more to deal perversely.

(3) We *speake peace* to ourselves, when we do it *slightly*. This the prophet complains of in some teachers, Jer. vi. 14. *They have healed the wound of the daughter of my people slightly*. And it is so with some persons, they make the healing of their wounds a slight work, a *look*, a *glance* of faith to the *promises* does it, and so the matter is ended. The apostle tells us, that the word did not profit some, because it was not *mixed with faith*, Heb. iv. 2. *μὴ ὁμιχρυσάμενοι*, it was not well tempered and mingled with faith. It is not a mere *look* to the word of mercy in the promise, but it must be mingled with faith until it is *incorporated* into the very nature of it; and then indeed it doth good unto the soul: if thou hast had a wound upon thy conscience, which was attended with *weakness* and *disquietness*, which now thou art freed of, how camest thou so? I looked to the promises of *pardon* and *healing*, and so found peace: yea but perhaps thou hast made too much haste, thou hast done it overly, thou hast not fed upon the promise, so as to mix it with faith, to have got all the *virtue* of it *diffused* into thy soul; only thou hast done it *slightly*; thou wilt find thy wound, ere it be long, breaking out again, and thou shalt know that thou art not cured.

(4) Whoever speaks *peace* to himself upon any one account, and at the same time hath another evil of no less *importance* lying upon his spirit, about which he *hath* had no dealing with God, that man cries *peace* when there is none. A little to explain my

my meaning: a man hath neglected a duty again and again, perhaps when in all *righteousness* it was due from him; his conscience is perplexed, his soul wounded, he hath no quiet in his bones by reason of his sin; he applies himself for healing, and finds peace. Yet in the mean time perhaps *worldliness*, or pride, or some other *folly* wherewith the Spirit of God is exceedingly grieved, may lie in the bosom of that man, and they neither disturb him, nor he them. Let not that man think that any of his peace is from God.

Then shall it be well with men when they have an equal respect to *all* God's commandments. God will *justify* us *from* our *sins*, but he will not justify the least sin in us; he is a God of *purser* eyes than to behold iniquity.

(5) When men of themselves *speak* peace to their consciences, it is seldom that God speaks *humiliation* to their souls: God's peace is *humbling* peace, *melting* peace, as it was in the case of *David*; Psal. li. 1. Never such deep *humiliation* as when *Nathan* brought him the tidings of his pardon.

Q. But you will say, *when may we take the comfort of a promise as our own, in relation to some peculiar wound for the quieting the heart?*

A. 1. In general, when God *speaks* it, be it when it will, sooner or later. I told you before, he may do it in the *very* instant of the sin itself, and that with such *irresistible* power, that the soul must needs receive his *mind* in it. Sometimes he will make us *wait* longer; but when he speaks, be it sooner or later, be it when we are sinning or repenting, be the condition of our souls what they please, if God *speaks* he must be received. There is not any thing that in our communion with him the Lord is more troubled with us for (if I may so say) than our *unbelieving* fears that keep us off

from receiving that strong consolation which he is so willing to give to us.

But you will say, *we are where we were; when God speaks it, we must receive it; that is true, but how shall we know when he speaks?*

Ans. 1. I would we could all *practically* come up to this, to receive peace when we are convinced that God speaks it, and that it is our duty to receive it; but,

2. There is (if I may so say) a secret instinct in faith, whereby it knows the voice of Christ, when he speaks indeed; as the babe leaped in the womb when the blessed virgin came to Elizabeth; faith leaps in the heart when Christ indeed draws nigh to it; *my sheep* (says Christ) *know my voice*, John x. 14. *they know my voice, they are used to the sound of it, and they know when his lips are opened to them, and are full of grace: the spouse was in a sad condition, Cant. v. 2. asleep in security; but yet as soon as Christ speaks she cries, it is the voice of my beloved that speaks; she knew his voice, and was so acquainted with communion with him that instantly she discovers him: and so will you also: if you exercise yourselves to acquaintance and communion with him, you will easily discern between his voice and the voice of a stranger. And take this *spiritus* with you; when he doth speak he speaks as never man spake; he speaks with power, and one way or other will make your hearts burn within you, as he did to the disciples, Luke xxii. He doth it by putting in his hand at the hole of the door, Cant. v. 4. his spirit into your hearts to seize on you.*

He that hath his *senses exercised to discern good or evil*, being increased in judgment and experience, by a constant observation of the ways of Christ's intercourse, the manner of the operations of the

Spirit, and the effects it usually produceth, is the best judge for himself in this case.

2. If the word of the Lord doth good to your souls, he speaks it. If it humble, if it cleanse and be useful for those ends, for which promises are given: viz. 1. To *endear*. 2. To *cleanse*. 3. To *melt* and bind to obedience. 4. To *self-emptiness* &c. But this is not my business: nor shall I farther *divert* in the pursuit of this *direction*; without the observation of it, sin will have great advantages towards the hardening of the heart.

C H A P. XIV.

The general use of the foregoing directions. The great direction for the accomplishment of the work aimed at. Act faith on Christ; the several ways whereby this may be done. Consideration of the fulness in Christ for relief proposed. Great expectations from Christ: grounds of these expectations. His mercifulness, his faithfulness. Event of such expectations: on the part of Christ: on the part of believers. Faith peculiarly to be acted on the death of Christ: Rom. vi. 3, 4, 5, 6. The work of the Spirit in this whole business.

NOW the considerations which I have hitherto insisted on, are rather of things preparatory to the work aimed at, than such as will effect it. It is the heart's due preparation for the work itself.

itself, without which it will not be accomplished, that hitherto I have aimed at.

Directions for the work itself are very few; I mean that are peculiar to it. And they are these that follow:

First, Set faith at work on Christ for the *killing* of thy sin. His blood is the great sovereign remedy for sin-sick souls. Live in this and thou wilt die a conqueror. Yea thou wilt through the good providence of God, live to see thy lust dead at thy feet. But thou wilt say, how shall faith act itself on Christ for this end and purpose? I say sundry ways.

1. By faith fill thy soul with a due consideration of that *provision* which is layed up in Jesus Christ for this end and purpose, that all thy *lusts*, this very lust wherewith thou art entangled, may be mortified by faith; ponder on this, that though thou art no way able, in or by thyself, to get the conquest over thy *distemper*, though thou art even weary of contending, and art utterly ready to faint, *Luke xvi. 17.* yet that there is enough in Jesus Christ, to yield thee relief. *Phil. iv. 13.* It staid the *prodigal* when he was ready to faint, that yet there was bread enough in his father's house; though he was at a distance from it, yet it relieved him, and staid him, in that there it was. In thy greatest *distress* and anguish, consider that *fullness* of grace, those *riches*, those *treasures* of strength, *might* and *help*, that are laid up in him, for our support, *John i. 16. Isa. xl. 28, 29. Col. ii. 19.* Let them come into, and abide in thy mind. Consider that he is *exalted* and made a *Prince* and a *Saviour* to give repentance unto *Israel*, *Acts, v. 31.* and if to give repentance, to give mortification, without which the other is not, nor can be, Christ tells us that we obtain *purging* grace by abiding in him;

John xv. 3. To act faith upon the fulness that is in Christ for our supply, is an eminent way of abiding in Christ, for both our insition and abode is by faith, *Rom. xi. 19, 20.* Let then thy soul by faith be exercised with such thoughts and apprehensions as these. I am a poor weak creature; unstable as water, I cannot excel. This corruption is too hard for me, and is at the very door of ruining my soul: and what to do I know not: my soul is become as parched ground and an habitation of dragons; I have made promises and broken them; vows and engagements have been as a thing of naught; many persuasions have I had, that I had got the victory and should be delivered, but I am deceived; so that I plainly see, that without some eminent succour and assistance, I am lost, and shall be prevailed on, to an utter relinquishment of God; but yet though this be my state and condition, yet

let the hands that hang down be lifted up, and the feeble knees be

John ii. 16. strengthened; behold the Lord Christ

Mat. xxviii. 18. that hath all fulness of grace in his heart, all fulness of power in his hand; he is able to slay all these his enemies. There is sufficient provision in him for my relief and assistance: he can take my drooping, dying soul, and make me more than a conqueror. *Why sayest*

Rem. viii. 38. thou, O my soul! my way is hid from the Lord, and my judgment is passed over from my God? Hast thou not known, hast thou not heard that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth fainteth not, neither is weary; there is no searching of his understanding; he giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no might he increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fail; but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings as eagles,

eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint, Isaiah xl. 49, &c. He can make the dry parched ground of my soul to become a *pool*, and my thirsty barren heart as springs of water; yea he can make this *habitation of dragons*, this heart so full of abominable lusts, and fiery temptations, to be a place for *grass and fruit* to himself. *Isaiah xxxv.* So God stayed *Paul* under his *temptation*, with the consideration of the *sufficiency* of his grace: *my grace is sufficient for thee*, 2 Cor. xii. 9. Though he were not immediately so far made *partaker* of it as to be freed from his *temptation*, yet the *sufficiency* of it in God, for that end and purpose, was enough to stay his spirit. I say then, by faith be much in the *consideration* of that supply and the fulness of it, that is in Jesus Christ; and how he can at any time give thee strength and deliverance. Now if hereby thou dost not find *success* to a conquest, yet thou wilt be *slaid* in the *chariot*, that thou shalt not fly out of the *field* until the battle be ended; thou wilt be kept from an utter *despondency*, and a lying down under thy unbelief; or a turning aside to *false* means and remedies that in the issue will not relieve thee. The efficacy of this *consideration* will be found only in the practice,

2. *Raise up thy heart by faith to an expectation of relief from Christ; relief in this case from Christ is like the prophet's vision, Hab. ii. 3.* It is for an *appointed time*; but at the end it shall speak, and not lie; though it *tarry*, yet wait for it, because it *will surely come*, it will not *tarry*; though it may seem somewhat long to thee, whilst thou art under thy trouble and perplexity, yet it shall *surely come* in the appointed time of the Lord Jesus, which is the *best* season. If then thou canst *raise up thy heart to a settled expectation* of relief from Jesus Christ; if thine eyes are towards him, as the

eyes of a servant to the hand of his master, *Psal. cxxiii. 2.* when he expects to receive somewhat from him, thy soul shall be *satisfied*, *Isaiah vii. 8.* he will assuredly deliver thee; he will *slay* the lust, and thy latter end shall be peace; *only* look for it, at his hand expect when and how he will do it. *If you will not believe, surely ye shall not be established.*

2. But thou wilt say, what ground have I to build such an expectation upon; so that I may expect not to be deceived?

A. As thou hast necessity to put thee on this course, *John vi. 68.* thou must be relieved and saved this way or none; to whom wilt thou go? so there are in the Lord Jesus innumerable things to encourage and engage thee to this expectation.

For the necessity of it, I have in part discovered it before, when I manifested that this is the work of faith, and of believers only. *Without me* (says Christ) *you can do nothing*, *John xv. 15.* speaking with especial relation to the purging of the heart from sin, *ver. 2.* Mortification of any sin, must be by a supply of grace. Of ourselves we cannot do it. Now it hath pleased the Father that in Christ all fulness should dwell, *Col. i. 19.* that of his fulness we might receive grace for grace, *John i. 16.* He is the head, from whence the new man must have influences of life and strength, or it will decay every day. If we are strengthened with *might in the inner man*, *Col. i. 11.* it is by Christ's dwelling in our hearts by faith, *Eph. iii. 16, 17.* That this work is not to be done without the Spirit, I have also shewed before. Whence do we expect the Spirit? From whom do we look for him? Who hath promised him to us, having procured him for us? Ought not all our expectations to this purpose to be on Christ alone? Let this then be fixed upon thy heart, that if thou hast not relief

from

from him, thou shalt never have any : all ways, endeavours, contendings, that are not *animated* by this expectation of relief from Christ and him only, are to no purpose, will do thee no good : yea if they are any thing but supportments of thy heart in this expectation, or means appointed by himself, for the receiving help from him, they are in vain.

Now farther to engage thee to this expectation :

1. Consider his *mercifulness*, *tenderness*, and *kindness*, as he is our great *high Priest*, at the *right hand* of God. Assuredly he *pities* thee in thy distress ; saith he, as one *whom his mother comforteth so will I comfort you*, Isaiah lxvi. 15. He hath the *tenderness* of a mother to a sucking child, Heb. ii. 17, 18. *Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren*, that he might be a *merciful and faithful high Priest* in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people, for in that himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted : how is the ability of Christ upon the account of his suffering proposed to us ? In that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able. Did the sufferings and temptations of Christ add to his ability and power ? not doubtless considered absolutely and in itself : but the ability here mentioned, is such as hath *readiness*, *proneness*, *willingness*, to put itself forth accompanying of it ; it is an ability of will against all dissuasions ; he is able having suffered and being tempted, to break through all dissuasions to the contrary, to relieve poor tempted souls : *Νοταται βοηθησαι*, he is able to help. It is a metonymy of the effect. For he can now be moved to help having been so tempted. So Cb. iv. 15, 16. *For we have not an high Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like*

as

as we are; yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need. The exhortation of ver. 16. is the same that I am upon, namely, that we would entertain expectations of relief from Christ, which the apostle there calls *χάρις τῆς ἐναντίας βοήθεια*, grace for seasonable help; if ever (says the soul) help were seasonable, it would be so to me in my present condition. This is that which I long for, grace for seasonable help. I am ready to die, to perish, to be lost for ever; iniquity will prevail against me, if help come not in; says the apostle, expect this help, this relief, this grace from Christ; yea, but on what account? that he lays down, ver. 15. and we may observe, that the word ver. 16. which we have translated to obtain, is, *λάβωμεν ἢ λάβομεν ἢ οὐκ*, that we may receive it, suitable and seasonable help will come in. I shall freely say this one thing of establishing the soul by faith in expectation of relief from Jesus

Christ, on the account of his mercy. *Matt. xi. 28.* *fulnes* as our High-Priest, will be more available to the ruin of thy lust and distemper, and have a better and speedier issue than all the rigidest means of self-maceration, that ever any of the sons of men engaged themselves into. Yea let me add, that never any soul did or shall perish by the power of *Isa. lv. 1, 2, 3.* any lust, sin or corruption, who could. *Revel. iii. 18:* raise his soul by faith to an expectation of relief from Jesus Christ.

2. Consider his faithfulness who hath promised, which may raise thee up, and confirm thee in this waiting in an expectation of relief. He hath promised to relieve in such cases, and he will fulfill his word to the utmost. God tells us that his covenant with us is like the ordinances of Heaven, the sun, moon and stars, which have their certain courses,

courses, *Jerem. xxxi. 36.* Thence *David* said, that he *watched* for relief from God, as one *watcheth* for the morning, a thing that will certainly come in its appointed season; so will be thy relief from Christ. It will come in its season, as the *dew* and *rain* upon the parched ground; for faithful is he who hath promised. Particular promises to this purpose are *innumerable*; with some of them (that seem peculiarly to suit to his condition) let the soul be always furnished.

Now there are two eminent *advantages* which always attend this expectation of succour from Jesus Christ.

1. It engages him to a full and speedy assistance; nothing doth more engage the heart of a man to be useful and helpful to another, than his expectation of help from him, if justly raised and countenanced by him who is to give the relief. Our Lord Jesus hath raised our hearts by his *kindness*, care and *promises*, to this expectation; certainly our rising up unto it, must needs be a great engagement upon him to assist us accordingly. This the *Psalmist* gives us as an approved *maxim*, *thou Lord never forsakest them that put their trust in thee.* When the heart is once won to rest in God, to repose himself on him, he will assuredly *satisfy* it. He will never be as water that fails, nor hath he said at any time to the *seed of Jacob*, *Seek ye my face in vain.* If Christ be chosen for the foundation of our supply, he will not fail us.

2. It engages the heart to attend *diligently* to all ways and means whereby Christ is wont to *communicate* himself to the soul, and so takes in the real assistance of all graces and ordinances whatever. He that expects any thing from a man, applies himself to the ways and means whereby it may be obtained. The beggar that expects an alms, lies at his *door* or in his way, from whom he doth expect

expect it. The way whereby, and the means wherein Christ communicates himself is, and are, his ordinances ordinarily. He that expects any thing from him, must attend upon him therein. It is the *expectation* of faith that sets the heart on work. It is not an idle groundless hope that I speak of. If now there be any vigour, efficacy and power in *prayer* or *sacraments* to this end of *mortifying* sin, a man will assuredly be interested in it all, by this expectation of relief from Christ. On this account I reduce all particular actings, by *prayer*, *meditation* and the like, to this head; and so shall not farther insist on them. When they are *grounded* on this bottom, and spring from this *root*, they are of singular use to this purpose; and not else.

Now on this direction for the mortification of a prevailing distemper you may have a thousand *probatum est*; who hath walked with God under this *temptation*, and hath not found the use and success of it? I dare leave the soul under it, without adding any more. Only some particulars relating thereunto may be mentioned.

(1) Act faith peculiarly upon the *death*, blood and cross of Christ; that is, on Christ as *crucified* and slain. Mortification of sin is peculiarly from the *death* of Christ. It is one peculiar, yea eminent end of the *death* of Christ, which shall assuredly be accomplished by it. He died to destroy the works of the devil; whatever came upon our *natures* by his first temptation, whatever receives strength in our persons by his daily suggestions, Christ died to destroy it all. He gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works, Tit. ii. 14. This was his aim and intentment (wherein he will not fail) in his giving himself for us. That we might be freed from the power

power of our sins, and purified from all our defiling lusts, was his design. *He gave himself for the church, that he might sanctify and cleanse it, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish*, Eph. v. 25, 26, 27. And this by virtue of his death, in various and several degrees shall be accomplished. Hence our washing, purging and cleansing is every where ascribed to his blood, 1 John i. 7. Heb. i. 3. Rev. i. 5. That being sprinkled on us, *purges our consciences from dead works to serve the living God*, Heb. ix. 14. This is that we aim at, this we are in pursuit of; that our consciences may be *purged from dead works*; that they may be rooted out, destroyed, and have place in us no more. This shall certainly be brought about by the death of Christ: there will virtue go out from thence to this purpose. Indeed, all supplies of the Spirit, all communications of grace and power, are from hence, as I have elsewhere shewed. Thus the apostle states it; *Rom. vi. ver. 2. is the case proposed that we have in hand; How shall we that are dead unto sin, live any longer therein?* Dead to sin by profession; dead to sin by obligation to be so; dead to sin by a participation of virtue and power for the killing of it; dead to sin by union and interest in Christ, in and by whom it is killed: how shall we live therein? Thus he presses byundry considerations, all taken from the death of Christ, in the ensuing verses. This must not be forgotten. *Know you not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?* We have in baptism an evidence of our implantation into Christ; we are baptized into him; but what of him are we baptized into an interest in? His death, saith he: If indeed we are baptized into

132: The MORTIFICATION of

into Christ, and beyond outward profession, we are baptized into his death. The explication of this, of our being baptized into the death of Christ, the apostle gives us, ver. 4, 5. Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life; knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. This is (saith he) our being baptized into the death of Christ, namely, our conformity thereunto. To be dead unto sin, to have our corruptions mortified, as he was put to death for sin; so that as he was raised up to glory, we may be raised up to grace and newness of life.

He tells us whence it is that we have this baptism into the death of Christ, ver. 6. and this is from the death of Christ itself: our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed: *concruciamur*, is crucified with him; not in respect of time, but of causality; we are crucified with him, meritoriously in that he procured the Spirit for us, to mortify sin; efficiently, in that from his death virtue comes forth for our crucifying; in the way of a representation and exemplar, we shall assuredly be crucified unto sin, as he was for our sin. This is that the apostle intends. Christ, by his death, destroying the works of the devil, procuring the Spirit for us, hath so killed sin as to its reign in believers, that it shall not obtain its end and dominion.

(2) Then act saith on the death of Christ, and that under these two notions:

- Phil. iii. 10. 1. In expectation of power.
 - Gal. iii. 3. 2. In endeavours for conformity.
- For the first, the direction given in general may suffice.

As to the latter, that of the apostle may give us some light into our direction, *Gal. iii. 1.* Let faith look on Christ in the Gospel as he is set forth *dying and crucified* for us: look on him *under the weight of our sins,* *1 Cor. xv. 31.* *praying, bleeding, dying:* bring him *1 Pet. i. 16.* in that condition into thy heart by *1 Pet. v. 1. 2.* faith: apply his blood so shed to thy *Col. i. 3.* corruptions: do this daily. I might draw out this consideration to a great length, in sundry particulars, but I must come to a close.

I have only then to add, the heads of the work of the Spirit in this business of *mortification*, which is so peculiarly ascribed to him.

In one word: this *whole work* which I have described as our duty, is effected, carried on, and accomplished by the power of the Spirit, in all the parts and degrees of it: As,

1. He alone *clearly and fully convinces* the heart of the *evil and guilt and danger of the corruption, lust, or sin to be mortified.* Without this conviction (or whilst it is faint, that the heart can wrestle with it, or digest it) there will be no thorough work made. An *unbelieving* heart (as in part we have all such) will shift with any consideration, until it be *over-powered* by clear and evident *convictions*: now this is the *proper work* of the Spirit: he *convinces of sin,* *John xvi. 8.* He alone can do it; if men's *rational* considerations, with the preaching of the *letter,* were able to *convince* them of sin, we should (it may be) see more *convictions* than we do. There comes by the preaching of the word an *apprehension* upon the *understandings* of men, that they are *sinners,* that *such and such things* are *sins*; that themselves are guilty of them; but this *light* is not powerful, nor doth it *lay hold* on the *practical* principles of the soul, so as to *conform* the mind and will unto them, to produce

effects suitable to such an *apprehension*. And therefore it is, that wise and knowing men, destitute of the *Spirit*, do not think those things to be sins at all wherein the *chief* movings and actings of *lust* do consist. It is the Spirit alone that can do, that doth this work to the purpose. And this is the first thing that the Spirit doth in order to the *mortification* of any lust whatever; it convinces the soul of all the *evil* of it, cuts off all its *pleas*, discovers all its *deceits*, stops all its *evasions*, answers its pretences, makes the soul own its abomination, and lie down under the *weight* of it. Unless this be done, all that follows is in vain.

2. The Spirit alone reveals unto us the *fulnes* of Christ for our relief, which is the consideration that stays the heart from false ways, and from despairing despondency, 1 Cor. ii. 8.

3. The Spirit alone *establishes* the heart in expectation of relief from Christ; which is the great *sovereign* means of mortification, as hath been discovered, 2 Cor. i. 21.

4. The Spirit alone brings the *cross* of Christ into our hearts, with its *sin-killing* power; for by the Spirit are we *baptized* into the death of Christ.

5. The Spirit is the *Author* and *Finisher* of our *sanctification*; gives new supplies and influences of grace for *holiness* and sanctification, when the contrary principle is weakened and abated, *Ephes.* iii. 16, 17, 18.

6. In all the soul's addresses to God in this condition, it hath *supportment* from the Spirit. Whence is the *power*, *life* and *wigour* of prayer? Whence its efficacy to prevail with God? Is it not from the Spirit? He is the Spirit of *supplication* promised to them who look on him whom they have pierced, *Zech.* xii. 10. enabling them to pray with *sighs* and *groans* that cannot be uttered, *Rom.* viii. 16.

This is confessed to be the great *medium* or way of *faith's*

faith's *prevailing* with God. Thus *Paul* dealt with his temptation, whatever it were; *I besought God that it might depart from me*, 2 Cor. xii. 8. What is the work of the Spirit in prayer, whence, and how it gives us in *assistance*, and makes us to *prevail*, what we are to do that we may enjoy his help for that purpose, is not my present intention to demonstrate.

T H E E N D.

STUDY IN BELIEVERS.

And's prevailing with God. Thus Paul says
with his own heart, and never it were; I believe
that it is right to say that a Christian is
in the world of the spirit in prayer, whose
faith is given us in answer, and makes us to
know, what we are to do that we may enjoy his
love for ever and ever.

36 Y 11

G E E